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CORINNA;

OR,

ITALY.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

G. SIDNEY, Printer,
Northumberland Street, Strand.

CORINNA;

OR,

ITALY.

BY MAD. DE STAËL HOLSTEIN.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY D. LAWLER.

Udrallo il bel paese,
Ch' Apennin parte, e'l mar circonda, et l'Alpe.

PETRARCH.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR CORRI, NO. 15, LITTLE NEWPORT
STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE; AND SOLD
BY COLBURN, NO. 48, CONDUIT
STREET, NEW BOND STREET,
AND MACKENZIE, NO. 24,
OLD BAILEY.

1807.



1807.

CORINNA.

BOOK. V.

CHAPTER II.

Not far from the Appian road, Oswald and Corinna visited the *Columbarium*, where the slaves are united with their masters; where are seen, in the same tomb, all who lived under the protection of one man, or one woman. The women of Livia, for example, they who appointed to the care of her beauty, struggled for its preservation against the power of time, and disputed with the years some one of her charms, are placed by her side in little urns. We fancy

that we see an assemblage of the obscure dead round one of the illustrious departed, not less silent than his train. At a little distance from here, is perceived the field where vestals, unfaithful to their vows, were buried alive; a singular instance of fanaticism in a religion naturally tolerant.

“ I will not conduct you to the catacombs, said Corinna to Lord Nelville, “ though, by a singular chance, they are under this Appian road; tombs thus having their abode beneath tombs; but this asylum of the persecuted christians has something so gloomy, and so terrible in it, that I cannot find resolution to return thither. It does not inspire the same affecting melancholy, as more open situations; it is like a dungeon adjoining a sepulchre; the torment of life accompanied with the horrors of death. Undoubtedly, we feel penetrated with admi-

ration of men who, by the power of enthusiasm alone, have been able to support this subterraneous existence; separating themselves from the sun, and from nature; but the mind is so ill at ease in this abode, that it is incapable of receiving any improvement. Man is a part of the creation; he must find his moral harmony in the whole system of the universe, in the usual order of destiny, and certain violent and formidable exceptions may astonish the mind; but they are so terrifying to the imagination, that the habitual disposition of the soul cannot benefit by them. Let us rather," continued Corinna, "go and see the pyramid of Cestius: the Protestants who die here, are all buried around this pyramid, which affords them a mild, tolerant, and liberal asylum." "Yes," answered Oswald, "it is there that several of my fellow countrymen have found their last

retreat. Let us go thither; thus, perhaps, at least, it may happen that I shall never quit you."—Corinna shuddered at these words, and her hand trembled as she supported herself upon the arm of Lord Nelville—"I am better, much better," said he, "since I have known you."—The countenance of Corinna was lighted up anew with that soft and tender joy which it was accustomed to express.

Cestius presided over the Roman games—his name is not to be found in history; but it is rendered illustrious by his tomb. The massive pyramid, which encloses his ashes, defends his death from that oblivion which has entirely effaced his life. Aurelian, fearing that this pyramid might be employed as a fortress to attack Rome, has caused it to be enclosed within the walls which are yet standing, not as useless ruins, but as the

actual enclosure of the modern city. They say that the form of the pyramids is in imitation of the flame which ascends from a funeral pile. It is certain, that this mysterious form attracts the eye, and gives a picturesque aspect to every perspective of which it forms a part. Opposite this pyramid is Mount Testaceo, under which there are extremely cool grottos, where feasts are given in summer. The festivals of Rome are not disturbed at the sight of tombs. The pines and the cypresses, which are perceived at various distances, in the smiling country of Italy, are also pregnant with solemn remembrances; and this contrast produces the same effect as the verses of Horace,

—morsure Delli

Linquenda tellus, et domus, et placens

Uxor.*

* Delli thou must die———
Thou must quit thy land, thy home, and thy beloved
bride.

In the midst of poetry, consecrated to every enjoyment upon earth, the ancients have always felt, that the idea of death has its pleasures : it is recalled by love and by festivals, and the most lively emotion of joy seems to increase even from the idea of the shortness of life.

Corinna and Nelville returned from the walk among the tombs, along the banks of the Tiber.—Once it was covered with vessels, and bordered with palaces ; once even its inundations were regarded as presages ; it was the prophetic river, the tutelary Deity of Rome. (14) At present, one would say that it rolled its tide through a land of shadows ; so solitary does it seem, so livid do its waters appear. The finest monuments of the arts, the most admirable statues have been thrown into the Tiber, and are concealed beneath its waves. Who knows whether, in order to find them, the river will not

one day be turned from its bed? But when we think that the chefs-d'œuvres of human genius are, perhaps, there before us, and that a more piercing eye can behold them through the waves—we feel that indescribable emotion which incessantly arises at Rome, under various forms, and creates a society for the mind in physical objects, which every where else are dumb.

CHAP. III.

RAPHAEL has said, that modern Rome was almost entirely built with the ruins of the ancient city; and it is certain that we cannot take a step here without being struck by some relics of antiquity. We perceive the *eternal walls*; to use the expression of Pliny, through the work of the latter centuries; the Roman edifices, almost all, bear an historical stamp; in them may be remarked, if we may so express it, the physiognomy of ages. From the Etruscans to our days, from that peo-

ple, more ancient than the Romans themselves, and who resembled the Egyptians by the solidity of their works, and the fantasticalness of their designs, from that people to Chevalier Bernini, an artist, whose style resembles that of the Italian poets of the seventeenth century, we may observe the human mind at Rome, in the different characters of the arts, the edifices and the ruins. The middle century, and the brilliant age of the Medici, re-appear before our eyes in their works, and this study of the past, in objects present to our sight, penetrates us with the genius of the times. It is believed that Rome had formerly a mysterious name, which was only known to some adepts; it seems that it is yet necessary to be initiated into the secret of this city. It is not simply an assemblage of habitations, it is the history of the world, figured by divers emblems, and represented under various forms.

Corinna agreed with Lord Nelville, that they should go and visit, together, the edifices of modern Rome, and reserve, for another opportunity, the admirable collections of pictures and statues which it contains. Perhaps, without accounting for it to herself, she desired to put off, till the most distant day possible, those objects which people cannot dispense with seeing at Rome; for who has ever quitted it without having contemplated the Apollo Belvidere, and the pictures of Raphael? This guarantee, weak as it was, that Oswald should not leave her, pleased his imagination. Is there not boldness, some one will ask, in endeavouring to retain the object of our love by any other means than the real sentiment itself? I really dont know,—but the more we love, the less we trust to the sentiment we inspire; and whatever may be the cause which secures the presence of the object who is dear

to us, we always embrace it joyfully. There is often much vanity in a certain species of boldness, and if charms, generally admired like those of Corinna, possess a real advantage, it is because they permit us to place her pride rather to the account of the sentiment she feels, than that she inspires.

Corinna and Nelville began their observations by the most remarkable of the numerous churches of Rome—they are all decorated with ancient magnificence; but something gloomy and fantastical is mingled with that beautiful marble, and those festival ornaments which have been taken from the Pagan temples. The pillars of Porphyry and Granite were so numerous in Rome, that they have lavishly distributed them, scarcely considering them of any value. At St. John of Lateran, that church so famous for the councils that have been held in it, are found such a

quantity of marble pillars, that many of them have been covered with a cement of plaster to make pilasters, so indifferent have they become to these riches from their multitude.

Some of these pillars were in the tomb of Adrian, others at the Capitol; these latter still bear on their chapter the figures of the geese which saved the Roman people: These pillars are adorned, some with Gothic, and others with Arabian, ornaments. The urn of Agrippa conceals the ashes of a Pope; for even the dead have yielded place to other dead; and the tombs have almost as often changed their masters as the abodes of the living.

Near St. John of Lateran is the holy stair-case, transported, it is said, from Jerusalem to Rome. It must only be ascended kneeling. Cæsar, himself, and Claudius also, mounted on their knees the stair-case which conducted to the Temple

of the Capitoline Jove. On one side of St. John of Lateran is the font, where it is said that Constantine was baptised. — In the middle of the square is seen an obelisk, which is, perhaps, the most ancient monument in the world—an obelisk cotemporary with the Trojan war!—an obelisk which the barbarous Cambyzes respected so much that, in honor of it, he put a stop to the conflagration of a city!—an obelisk for which a king pledged the life of his only son!—The Romans have, miraculously, brought this pillar to Italy, from the lowest part of Egypt.—They turned the Nile from its course to seek it, and transport it to the sea. This obelisk is still covered with hieroglyphics which have preserved their secret during so many ages, and which to this day defy the most learned researches. The Indians, the Egyptians, the antiquity of antiquity, might, perhaps, be revealed to us by

these signs.—The wonderful charm of Rome is not only the real beauty of its monuments ; but the interest which it inspires in exciting thought ; and this kind of interest increases every day with each new study.

One of the most singular churches of Rome, is that of St. Paul : its exterior is like a barn, badly built, and the interior is ornamented with eighty pillars of so fine a marble, and so exquisite a make, that one would believe they belonged to an Athenian temple described by Pausanias. Cicero said—*We are surrounded by the vestiges of history*,—if he said so then, what shall we say now ?

The pillars, the statues, the base-reliefs of ancient Rome, are so lavished in the churches of the modern city, that there is one (St. Agnes) where base-reliefs, turned, serve for the steps of a stair-case, without any one having taken the trouble to exa-

mine what they represented. What an astonishing aspect would ancient Rome offer now, if the marble pillars, and the statues, had been left in the same place where they were found ! The ancient city would still have remained standing almost entire—but would the men of our day dare to walk in it ?

The palaces of the great lords are extremely vast, of an architecture often very fine, and always imposing : but the interior ornaments are rarely tasteful ;—we do not find in them even an idea of those elegant apartments which the finished enjoyments of social life have given rise to elsewhere. These vast abodes of the Roman princes are desert and silent ; the lazy inhabitants of these superb palaces retire into some little chamber unperceived, and leave strangers to survey their magnificent galleries, where the finest pictures of the age of Leo X.

are collected together. The great Roman lords, of the present day, are as unacquainted with the pompous luxury of their ancestors, as these ancestors themselves were with the austere virtues of the Roman republic. The country houses convey still more the idea of this solitude, of this indifference of the possessors in the midst of the most admirable abodes in the world. People may walk in these immense gardens, without suspecting that they have a master. The grass grows in the middle of the walks, and in these very walks, are trees fantastically cut according to the ancient taste that prevailed in France.—What a singular whimsicality in this neglect of the necessary, and affectation of the useless!—But one is often surprised at Rome, and in the greater part of the other cities of Italy, at the taste of the Italians for extravagant ornaments,—they who have incessantly

before their eyes the noble simplicity of the antique.—They love what is brilliant, much better than what is elegant and commodious.—They have, in every instance, the advantages, and the inconveniences of not living habitually in society. Their luxury is rather that of the imagination, than the luxury of actual enjoyment;—isolated as they are among themselves, they cannot dread the spirit of ridicule, which seldom penetrates at Rome into domestic secrecy; and often, in contrasting the interior with the exterior of their palaces, one would say, that the greater part of the Italian nobility arrange their dwellings more to dazzle the passengers than to receive their friends.

After having surveyed the churches and the palaces, Corinna conducted Oswald to the villa Mellini, a solitary garden, without any other ornament than

its magnificent trees. From here is seen, at a distance, the chain of the Appenines; the transparency of the air colours these mountains, and throws, them forward in the perspective, giving them a most picturesque appearance. Oswald and Corinna remained in this spot to taste the charms of the sky, and the tranquillity of nature. It is impossible to form an idea of this singular tranquillity without having lived in the Southern countries. On a hot day there is not felt the lightest breath of wind. The least slip of grass is perfectly still, and the animals themselves, partake of the indolence which the fine weather inspires: in the middle of the day, you neither hear the hum of flies, the chirping of grasshoppers, nor the song of birds; no object fatigues itself with useless and trifling agitation; all sleep till storm, or the passions awaken the vehemence of na-

ture, who then rushes with impetuosity from her profound repose.

There are in the gardens of Rome, a great number of trees clad in perennial green, which heighten the illusion produced by the mildness of the climate during winter. Pines, of a particular elegance, large, tufted towards the top, and interwoven with one another, form a kind of plain in the air, whose effect is charming, when we mount sufficiently high to perceive it. The inferior trees are placed beneath the shelter of this verdant vault. Two palm trees only are found in Rome, which are both planted in the gardens of the monks; one of them, placed upon an eminence, serves as a point of sight, and a particular pleasure must always be felt in perceiving and retracing, in the various perspectives of Rome, this deputy of Africa—this type of Southern climates

more burning still than that of Italy, and which awakens so many new ideas and sensations.

“Do you not find,” said Corinna, contemplating with Oswald the country surrounding them; “that nature in Italy disposes us more to thought than any where else?—It might be said, that she is here more in affinity with man, and that the Creator uses her as a medium of interpretation between his creature and himself.” “Undoubtedly,” replied Oswald, “I think so; but who knows whether it may not be the deep feelings of tenderness which you excite in my heart, that render me sensible to all I see?—You reveal to me the emotions and thoughts, which exterior objects can give birth to. I existed, but in my heart; you have awakened my imagination. But this magic of the universe, which you teach me to know, will never

present me with any thing more lovely than your look, more moving than your voice." " May the sentiment I now inspire you with, last as long as my life," said Corinna, " or, at least, may my life never survive the power of inspiring it!"

Oswald and Corinna terminated their tour of Rome by the Borghese villa. Of all the Roman gardens and palaces, here the splendors of nature, and the arts, are assembled with the greatest taste and brilliancy. Here are seen trees of every kind, and magnificent fountains; an incredible number of statues, vases, and antique sarcophaguses, mingled with the charms of nature, young, and blooming beneath a southern sky. The ancient mythology here seems revived; the naiades are placed on the borders of rivers, the nymphs in woods worthy of them, the tombs beneath Elysian shades, and the statue of Esculapius, in the middle

of an isle, while that of Venus appears to rise out of the waters : Ovid and Virgil might walk in this enchanting spot, and still believe themselves in the Augustan age. The chefs-d'œuvres of sculpture, which the palace contains, give it a magnificence ever new. At a distance, through the trees, is perceived the city of Rome and St. Peter's, the country, and those long arches, the wrecks of aqueducts, which conveyed the springs from the mountains into ancient Rome. Everything is there that can excite thought, delight the imagination, and foster reverie. The most pure sensations are confounded with the pleasures of the soul, and give an idea of perfect happiness ; but when we ask why this charming abode is not inhabited ? they answer you that the noxious air (*la cattiva aria*) will not permit any one to live here during summer.

This noxious air, in a manner, forms the Siege of Rome; it advances every year some steps farther, and they are obliged to abandon the most charming habitations to its empire: undoubtedly, the absence of trees, in the country, about the city, is one of the causes of it; and it is, perhaps, on that account, that the ancient Romans consecrated the woods to goddesses, in order to make them respected by the people. At present, forests without number, have been cut down;—can there, in effect, exist, in our days, any place so sanctified, that the avidity of man will spare it from the work of devastation? The noxious air is the scourge of the inhabitants of Rome, and threatens the city with an entire depopulation; but, perhaps, it increases the effect produced by the superb gardens which are seen within the walls of Rome. The malign influence is not felt by any exterior sign; you breathe

an air which seems pure, and is very agreeable; the earth is smiling and fertile; a delicious coolness refreshes you in the evening, after the burning heat of the day; and all this is death!

“I love,” said Oswald to Corinna, “this invisible danger, under the form of the softest impressions. If death be only, what I believe it to be, a summons to a happier existence, why should not the perfume of flowers, the umbrage of fine trees, and the refreshing breath of the evening breeze, be the bearers of that summons? Undoubtedly, governments ought to watch, in every way, over the preservation of human life; but there are secrets in nature which the imagination alone can penetrate; and I easily conceive, that neither the inhabitants, nor the strangers who visit it, are disgusted with Rome, by the species of peril to which they are exposed there, during the most beautiful seasons of the year.”

BOOK VI.



The manners and character of the Italians.

CHAP. I.

THE indecision of Oswald's character, increased by his misfortunes, led him to dread forming any irrevocable resolve. He had not even dared, in his state of irresolution, to ask of Corinna the secret of her name and destiny; nevertheless, his love acquired every day new strength; he never beheld her without emotion; he could hardly, in company, quit, even for an instant, the place where she was seated; she did not speak a word that he felt not;

nor did she experience one moment's sadness or gaiety, that was not reflected in his countenance. But in the midst of his admiration, and of his love for Corinna, he recollected how little such a woman agreed with the English manner of living; how much she differed from the idea which his father had formed of her whom it would be proper for him to espouse; and all that he said to Corinna, partook of the trouble and constraint which these reflections caused him.

Corinna perceived this too well; but it would have cost her so much to break off with Lord Nelville, that she, herself, endeavoured to avoid, as much as he, a decisive explanation; and as she was possessed of much foresight, she was happy with the present, such as it was, although it was impossible for her to know what would be the issue of it:

She had become entirely divided from

the world, in order to devote herself entirely to her passion for Oswald. But, at length, so much affected was she at his silence, with regard to the future, that she resolved to accept an invitation for a ball, to which she had been pressingly solicited. Nothing is more indifferent at Rome, than to leave society, and to appear in it again, alternately, just as the parties feel it agreeable to themselves: it is the country where people trouble their minds the least with what is elsewhere called *gossip*; each one does as he pleases, without any person enquiring about it, at least, without finding, in others, any obstacle either to his love or to his ambition. The Romans are as inattentive to the conduct of their fellow countrymen, as to that of strangers, who pass and repass through their city, the rendezvous of Europeans. When Lord Nelville knew that Corinna was going to the ball, he was vexed at it.

He thought he had perceived in her, for some time, a melancholy disposition in sympathy with his own : all on a sudden she appeared to him to be taken up with dancing, an art in which she excelled ; and her imagination seemed fired at the approach of a *fête*. Corinna was not frivolous by character ; but she felt herself every day, more and more, enslaved by her love for Oswald ; and she would fain endeavour to weaken its force. She knew, by experience, that reflection and sacrifices, effected by exertion of the mind, have less effect upon passionate characters than dissipation, and she thought that reason did not consist in conquering ourselves according to rules ; but by doing so how we can.

“ I must,” said she to Lord Nelville, who reproached her with her intention of going to the ball. “ I must know, however, if there be only you in the world who can fill the void of my life ; if

that which pleased me formerly, may not yet have the power to amuse me; and if the sentiment you have inspired me with must absorb every other interest, every other idea."—"You would then cease to love me?" replied Oswald."—"No;" answered Corinna, "but it is only in domestic life that it could be pleasing to me to feel thus governed by a single affection. To me who need my talents, my mind, and my imagination, to support the *eclat* of that kind of life which I have adopted, it must be painful—extremely painful to love as I love you."—"You would not sacrifice to me then," said Oswald to her, "this homage and this glory."—"Of what importance can it be to you," said Corinna, to know whether or not, I would sacrifice them to you? Since we are not absolutely destined for one another, it would not be prudent to let that happiness, with which I must be satisfied, wither for ever."—

Lord Nelville made no answer; because it was necessary, in expressing his sentiments, to avow also the intention they inspired, and of those his own heart was still in ignorance. He was silent, therefore, and, sighing, followed Corinna to the ball, whither he went with much reluctance.

It was the first time, since his calamity, that he had seen a large assembly; and the tumult of a *fete*, caused him such an impression of sadness, that he remained a long time in a room contiguous to that appropriated for the ball, his head supported on his hand, not even curious to behold Corinna dance. He listened to the festive music, which, like every other music, produces reflection, though only intended to inspire joy. The Count d'Erfeuil arrived, quite enchanted at the sight of a ball, which produced in him some recollections of France.—“ I have

tried all I could," said he to Lord Nelville, "to discover something interesting in these ruins, of which they talk so much, and I can really find no charms in them. It must be an effect of very great prejudice to admire those heaps of rubbish covered with thorns. I shall speak my mind of them when I return to Paris, for it is time that this Italian delusion should cease. There is not a monument, now standing whole in any part of Europe, that I would not sooner see than those old stumps of pillars, those base-reliefs, all black with time, which can only be admired by dint of erudition. A pleasure which must be bought with so much study, does not appear to me very lively in itself—to be charmed with the opera at Paris, nobody need grow pale over books." Lord Nelville made no reply.—The Count interrogated him afresh, as to the impression that Rome produced on him. "In the midst of a

ball," said Oswald, "is not the most proper time for serious conversation on this subject; and you know that I am incapable of any other."—"Well and good:" replied the Count d'Erfeuil, "I am more gay than you I admit; but who knows whether I am not also the most wise of the two? Believe me, there is much philosophy in my apparent levity: it is the way we should take life."—"You are perhaps in the right," answered Oswald, "but it is from nature, and not from reflection, that you possess that way of thinking; and that is why your manner of taking life may only suit yourself."

The Count d'Erfeuil heard the name of Corinna mentioned in the ball room, and entered it, to know what was going forward. Lord Nelville advanced as far as the door, and beheld the Prince Amalfi, a Neapolitan of the most handsome figure, who besought Corinna to dance with him

the *Tarantula*, a Neapolitan dance, full of grace and originality. The friends of Corinna besought her also to comply with his request. She yielded to their desire, without waiting to be asked frequently, which astonished the Count d'Erfeuil, accustomed as he was to the refusals with which it is customary to precede consenting to a request of this nature. But, in Italy, these kind of graces are unknown, and all believe they please most in society, by shewing an eagerness to do what is asked of them. Corinna would have invented this natural behaviour, if she were not already accustomed to it. The dress she had chosen for the ball was elegant and light; her hair was gathered up in a fillet of silk, after the Italian fashion; and her eyes expressed a lively pleasure, which rendered her more seducing than ever. Oswald was disturbed at this; he warred against himself; he was indig-

nant at being captivated with charms which he ought to lament, since, far from thinking to please him, it was to escape his empire that Corinna appeared so attractive.—But who could resist the seductions of a grace like her's? Were she even disdainful, she would be still more omnipotent; and that certainly was not the disposition of Corinna. She perceived Lord Nelville, and blushed, while there was in her eyes, as she looked upon him, a most enchanting softness.

The Prince d'Amalfi accompanied himself, in dancing, with castanets. Corinna before she began saluted the assembly most gracefully with both her hands, then turning round upon her heel took the tambourine which the Prince Amalfi presented her with. She then began to dance, striking the air upon the tambourine, and there was in all her motions, an agility, a grace, a mixture of modesty and volup-

tuousness, which might give an idea of that power which the Bayadores exercise over the imagination of the Indians, when they dance poetically ; if we may use the expression, when they express so many different sentiments by the characteristic steps, and the enchanting pictures which they offer to the sight. Corinna was so well acquainted with all the attitudes which the ancient painters, and sculptors, have represented, that by a light movement of her arms, sometimes in placing the tambourine over her head, sometimes forward, with one of her hands, whilst the other run over the little bells with an incredible dexterity, she recalled to mind the dancers of Herculaneam, and gave birth, successively, to a crowd of new ideas for painting and design. (15)

It was not the French style, characterised by the elegance and difficulty of the step, it was a talent more connected

with imagination and sentiment. The complection of the music was alternately expressed, by the exactitude and softness of the movements. Corinna, in dancing, conveyed to the souls of her spectators, what was passing in her own. The same as in her extempore poetry, her performance on the lyre, or the efforts of her pencil,—she reduced everything to language. The musicians, in beholding her, exerted themselves, to make the genius of their art felt more sensibly, and a kind of passionate joy, a sensibility of the imagination, electrified, at once, every witness of the magic dance, and transported them to that state of ideal existence in which we dream of happiness that does not exist in this world.

There is a part of this Neapolitan dance when the lady kneels, whilst the gentleman moves round her, not as a master, but a conqueror. — What at this moment

were the charms and dignity of Corinna. How, even in kneeling, did she appear the sovereign! And when she arose, striking her æreal cymbal, she seemed animated with that lively enthusiasm of youth and beauty, which would create a belief, that nothing was wanting to complete her happiness. Alas! it was far otherwise; but Oswald feared it, and sighed in the midst of his admiration of Corinna, as if each triumph of her genius was a degree of separation from him; at the conclusion of the dance, the gentleman kneels in his turn, and the lady dances round him. Corinna in this part, if it were possible, surpassed herself; her step was so light, as she tripped two or three times round the same circle, that her buskined feet seemed to fly over the floor with the velocity of lightning; and when she lifted up one of her hands, shaking the tambourine, while with the other she

motioned the Prince Amalfi to rise, all the male part of the company were tempted to throw themselves on their knees too, except Oswald, who retired a few paces backward, and the Count d'Erfeuil, who advanced a few paces forward to compliment Corinna. This enthusiasm of the Italians was by no means assumed; but was the spontaneous effect of their feelings. They are not sufficiently practised in society to pay much regard to the effect which their actions will produce; they never let themselves be thwarted in their pleasures by vanity, nor turned aside from the object of their pursuit by any unevenness in the road which leads to it.

Corinna was charmed at the applauses she received, and thanked all her admirers with the most simple grace.—The satisfaction she felt at having succeeded so well, appeared beneath a veil of modesty; but her chief anxiety was to make her way

through the crowd, in order to reach the door against which was leaning the pensive Oswald. When she had reached the spot, she paused to hear what he would say to her:—"Corinna," said he, endeavouring to conceal his captivation as well as the pain that he felt: "Corinna, I hope you have met with sufficient homage and sufficient applause; but in the midst of these enthusiastic admirers, have you found one certain and courageous friend—one protector for life? Can this vain tumult of applause satisfy a heart like thine?"

CHAP. II.

CORINNA was prevented by the crowd from making any answer to Lord Nelville. They were going to the supper room, and each *cavaliere servente*, was hastening to seat himself by the side of his fair. A strange lady entered, when all the seats were occupied, and no gentleman, except Lord Nelville, and Count d'Erfeuil, made her an offer of his. This was not by an effect of impoliteness or of egotism; but the idea which the great Roman lords entertain of honour and duty, is, not to stir

one step, nor be absent one moment from their ladies. Some who were not able to find seats, stood behind the chair of their mistresses, ready to wait upon them at the least signal. The ladies only conversed with their gallants; strangers wandered unnoticed about the circle; for the ladies in Italy are unacquainted with coquetry, nor does any vain triumph of self-love, ever introduce itself into their tender attachments. They have no desire to please any other than him who possesses their affection; you can never engage their minds before you have interested their hearts or pleased their eyes, and frequently the most sudden beginnings of passion are followed by a sincere devotion, and even a very long constancy. In Italy, infidelity is more severely condemned in man than in woman. Three or four Signors, under different titles, are followers of the same lady, who leads them about with

her often without even concerning herself to mention their names to the master of the house who receives them. One is the favoured suitor—the other he who aspires to be so—a third is called the sufferer; (*il patito*;) this latter is absolutely disdained; but, nevertheless, permitted to continue his adoration; and all these rivals live peaceably together. The *stiletto system* is now only practised by the lower orders of the people. There is in this country a whimsical mixture of simplicity and depravity, dissimulation and truth, sincerity and revenge, weakness and resolution, which can only be explained by constant observation. The reason of this medley of opposite ingredients in the character of the Italians is, that they never act from vanity, which accounts for their good qualities; but the cause of their bad ones is, that they will do a

great deal for interest, whether that interest is allied to love, to ambition, or to fortune.

The distinctions of rank have in general little effect in Italy ; this is not through philosophy, but their facility of character, and familiarity of manners.

This accounts for the little influence of aristocratic prejudices amongst them ; for as society does not pretend to judge of anything, it embraces the opinions of all.

After supper the company betook themselves to play. Some ladies preferred the game of hazard, whilst others chose the silent one of whist ; and not a word was heard pronounced in that room which so lately was filled with noise. The inhabitants of the south often pass from the greatest agitation to the most profound repose : another contrasted part of their character is indo-

lence, united to the most unwearied activity. In any individual instance among these people, we must beware of judging upon a first observation, since we find in them the most opposite qualities: if at one moment they are prudent, perhaps, in the next, they shew themselves the boldest of men; if they appear indolent, it is only because they are reposing after some exertion, or preparing for another: their soul loses none of its force under apparent tranquillity, but is, most probably, concentrating all its energies, to act upon some great and decisive energy.

In this Roman assembly, of which Oswald and Corinna formed a part, there were men who lost enormous sums at play, without betraying, in their countenances, the slightest disturbance—had these men been relating some facts of trifling importance, they would have ex-

hibited the most lively expression, and the most animated gestures. But when their passions arrive at a certain pitch of violence, they dread the eye of observation, and almost ever conceal them beneath a veil of silence and apparent apathy.

The scene of the ball was impressed upon the mind of Lord Nelville, accompanied with a bitter sensation; for he feared that the enthusiasm of the Italians had, at least, for a moment, robbed him of the affection of Corinna. This rendered him very unhappy; but pride whispered him to conceal it, or discover it only by expressing contempt for the suffrages of those who had flattered the dazzling accomplishments of his mistress. He was invited, by the company, to make one at play, but he refused. Corinna did the same, and motioned him to come and sit down by her. Oswald expressed himself uneasy, lest he should

expose Corinna to observation by thus passing the whole evening with her in company. "Make yourself easy on that score," said she, "nobody will trouble their heads with us: it is the custom here for people to do as they please in company; we have no established, ceremonious forms to lay one another under an unpleasant restraint, nor do we exact any formal attention; a general polite disposition is all that is expected. This is not, certainly, a country where liberty exists, such as you understand the term in England; but we enjoy here a perfect independence in society." "That is to say," replied Oswald, "you shew a complete disregard for manners." "At least," interrupted Corinna, "we shew no hypocrisy. M. de la Rochefoucault has said, '*the least defect of a woman of intrigue is to be so*:' in effect, whatever may be the faults of women in Italy, they do

not seek to hide them by dissimulation. And if the sacredness of the nuptial band be not here sufficiently respected, it is, at least, with the consent of both parties."

"It is not from sincerity that this kind of frankness proceeds," replied Oswald, "but indifference for public opinion. When I arrived here, I had a letter of recommendation to a princess, which I gave to my Italian servant to deliver; he said to me, 'Sir, it will be of no use to deliver this letter now, for the princess sees nobody; she is INAMORATA;' and this state of being INAMORATA, is announced with as much indifference as any other situation incidental to our existence. This publicity cannot be palliated by the plea of extraordinary vehemence of passion; several attachments of this sort succeed each other, and are of equal notoriety. So little are

the women given to mystery in this respect, that they avow their connections with less embarrassment than those of our country would feel in speaking to their husbands. It is easy to believe that no profound or delicate sentiment is mixed with this sensibility of passion, divested of modesty. Hence it happens, that in this nation, where nothing is thought of but love, there is not a single romance; because love is here so rapid, and so public, that it affords no interesting developements; and to give a true picture of general manners in this respect, it would be necessary to begin and terminate it in the first page. Pardon me, Corinna," cried lord Nelville, observing the pain that he gave her; "you are an Italian, and that thought ought to disarm me; but one of the causes of that incomparable grace, which distinguishes you, is the union of all the characteristic

charms of different nations. I know not in what country you have been brought up; but it appears to me certain, that you have not passed your whole life in Italy—perhaps in England——Ah, Corinna! if that were so, how could you have quitted that sanctuary of modesty and delicacy, for these regions, where not only virtue, but love itself, is so badly understood? It is respired in the air; but does it penetrate the heart? Your poetry, in which love performs so principal a part, possesses considerable grace, and much imagination; it is ornamented with brilliant pictures, whose colours are lively and voluptuous. But where will you find that tender, melancholy sentiment, which animates the compositions of English bards? What have you that can be put in comparison with the scene between Belvidera and her husband, in OTWAY; or with that of

SHAKESPEARE, between Romeo and Juliet? But, above all, what have you to compare with those admirable lines of THOMSON, in his 'Spring,' where he paints, in such noble and affecting traits, the happiness of love, when sanctioned by marriage? Have you any such marriage in Italy? And can love exist where there is no domestic felicity? Is it not this happiness which the heart seeks, as possession is the object of sensual passion? Do not all young and beautiful women resemble each other, unless the qualities of the mind and soul determine a preference? And what desire is excited by all these qualities? Marriage. That is to say, the association of every thought, and of every mind. Illicit love, when, unfortunately, it exists amongst us, is, if it may be so expressed, only a reflection of marriage. In such connections, that happiness is sought for,

which the wanderer cannot find at home; and infidelity itself is more moral in England, than marriage in Italy."

These words were hard: they deeply wounded the sensibility of Corinna; who, rising immediately, her eyes filled with tears, quitted the room, and returned directly home. Oswald was distracted at having offended her; but it was the irritation of his mind, occasioned by the impression she made in the ball, which had betrayed itself in the remarks that had just escaped him. He followed her to her abode; but she refused to see him. He called again the next morning, but in vain: her door was closed against him. This protracted refusal to receive Lord Nelville, was not agreeable to the disposition of Corinna; but she was painfully afflicted at the opinion he had expressed of the Italian women; and this opinion alone induced

her to form a determination of concealing, for the future, if possible, the sentiment that preyed on her heart.

Oswald, on his side, found that, in this instance, the behaviour of Corinna was not consistent with her natural simplicity, and he became confirmed more and more in the discontent with which the ball had inspired him ; and a disposition of mind was excited from these circumstances, capable of struggling against the passion whose empire he dreaded. His principles were rigid, and the mystery which enveloped the past life of her whom he loved, afflicted him intensely. The manners of Corinna appeared to him most fascinating, but sometimes too much animated by the universal desire of pleasing. He discovered much nobleness and reserve in her conversation and deportment ; but she seemed to indulge in too much latitude of opinion. In fact, Oswald was a captivated man,

hurried away by the passion he felt for his accomplished mistress; but cherishing in his breast an opponent which combated his feelings. Such a situation of mind is frequently attended with much bitterness. We are dissatisfied with ourselves, and with others. We suffer and feel, at the same time, that our suffering ought to increase, or, at least, terminate in a violent *eclaircissement*, by which one of those two sentiments that gnaw the heart must obtain a complete triumph.

It was in such a state of mind as this that Lord Nelville wrote to Corinna. His letter was harsh, and foreign to the purpose. He felt this; but various confused emotions impelled him to send it: he was rendered so wretched by these internal conflicts, that he wished, at all hazards, for some circumstance or other to terminate them.

A report, which had just been commu-

nicated to him by the Count d'Erfeuil, though he did not give credence to it, contributed perhaps to give more asperity to his expressions. It was noised about Rome, that Corinna was about to marry the Prince Amalfi. Oswald knew very well that she did not love him, and concluded, of course, that the events of the ball afforded the only foundation for such a report; but he was convinced that she had been at home to him on the morning when he was refused admission; and too proud to discover the slightest sentiment of jealousy, he satisfied his bile in denigrating the nation, for which he beheld, with so much pain, the predilection of Corinna.

CHAP. VI.

*Oswald's Letter to Corinna.**January 24, 1795.*

“ You refuse to see me ; you are offended at our conversation of the night before last ; and you have, doubtless, formed an intention to open your doors in future only to your own countrymen, meaning, probably, by this means, to expiate the fault you have committed in admitting to your society a man of another nation. However, far from repenting my sincerity with respect to the Italians, far from regretting the observations which I made to you, whom, deluded by chimeras, I wished to

consider as an Englishwoman, I will venture to predict more strongly still, that you will find neither happiness nor dignity, should you make choice of a husband from that society by which you are surrounded. I know not the Italian worthy of you; there is not one by whose alliance you could be honoured, let him be invested with whatever title he may. The male character in Italy is still less estimable than the female; for the men possess the defects of the women, in addition to their own. Will you persuade me, that these inhabitants of the South, who so pusillanimously shrink from pain, and pursue the phantom of pleasure, with so much avidity, can be susceptible of love? Have you not seen (I beg to know) the very last month, an Italian husband, at a public spectacle, who but eight days before had lost his wife, and a wife whom he pretended to love? They are here not

more eager to remove the dead from their sight than to efface the remembrance of them from their mind. The funeral ceremonies are attended to by the priests, as the rites of love are performed by the *obsequious Cavaliers*: ceremonial and custom supply the place of regret and enthusiasm. Lastly, and 'tis this that principally destroys love, the men of Italy are incapable of inspiring the fair sex with any kind of respect: the latter do not feel obliged by the submission of the former; because their character is not dignified with firmness, nor their life with serious occupation. For the social order of nature to appear in all its beauty, man must be the protector, and woman the protected; and the protector must adore that weakness which he defends, and reverence the powerless deity, like the household gods who were believed by the ancients to watch over their domestic felicity. Here it might almost

be said, that every woman is a Sultanness, having at her command a seraglio of men.

The men are here distinguished by that softness and pliability of character, which properly belongs to women. An Italian proverb says: '*who knows not how to feign, knows not how to live.*' Is not that a woman's proverb? In effect, how can the manly character be formed upon true principles of dignity and strength, in a country which affords no military career of glory, which contains no liberal institution? Hence it is, that they direct their minds to all the little arts of cunning; they treat life like a game of chess, in which success is everything. All that remains to them from antiquity, is something gigantic in their expressions, and in their exterior magnificence; but this baseless grandeur is frequently accompanied with all that is rampant in taste, and miserably negligent in domestic life. Is this, Corinna,

the nation which you would be expected to prefer to every other? Is this the nation whose roaring applauses are so necessary to you, that every other destiny would appear dull and congenial compared with their noisy '*bravos*?' Who could flatter himself with being able to render you happy, away from these dear scenes of tumult? What an inconceivable character is that of Corinna! profound in sentiment, but frivolous in taste; independent from innate pride, yet servile from standing in need of dissipation! She is a sorceress whose spells alternately alarm, and then allay the fears which they have created; who dazzles our view in native sublimity, and then, all of a sudden, disappears from this region, where she is without her like, to lose herself in an indiscriminate crowd. Corinna, Corinna, he who is your adorer, cannot help feeling his love disturbed by fear!

“OSWALD.”

Corinna, in reading this letter, was much incensed at the inveterate prejudices which Oswald expressed himself to entertain of her country. But she was happy enough, in her conjectures, to discover that she owed this to the dissatisfaction he experienced at the *fête*, and to her refusing to see him ever since, after his final conversation on that evening; and this reflection softened a little the painful impression which the letter produced upon her. She hesitated for some time, or, at least, fancied she hesitated, as to the conduct which she should observe towards him. The tenderness she cherished for this eccentric lover, induced a wish to see him; but her feelings were wounded at the supposition, on his part, of a desire for the conjugal union on her's, since their fortunes were at least upon a parity, and since, in revealing her name, it would be easy to shew, that it was by no means inferior to that of Lord Nel-

ville. Nevertheless, the independence and singularity of that mode of life which she had adopted, ought to have inspired her with a disinclination for marriage; and, most assuredly, she would have repulsed the idea, had her passion allowed her to reflect upon the privations she would have to undergo, in espousing an Englishman, and renouncing Italy.

We willingly make an offering of pride upon the altar of the heart; but when worldly convenience, and interest, oppose obstacles in any shape, when we can suppose that the object of our love makes any sort of sacrifice to accelerate an union with us, it is no longer possible to shew him any alteration of sentiment. Corinna not being equal to a determination to break off with Oswald, wished to persuade herself of the possibility of seeing him in future, and yet concealing the passion with which she had inspired him. It was

in this intention that she came to a determination to confine herself, in the answer she should send to his letter, merely to his unjust accusations against the Italian nation, and to reason with him upon this subject, as if it were the only one that interested her. Perhaps the best way in which a woman of intellect can resume her coldness and dignity, is by seeking an asylum in her own mind.

Corinna to Lord Nelville.

Jan. 25, 1795.

“ Did your letter, my lord, concern only me, I should not have attempted the task of self-justification: my character is so easy to know, that he who might not be able to comprehend it of himself, would derive little aid in his scrutiny, by any explanation that I could give him on the subject. The virtuous reserve of the English women, and the graceful art

of the French, take my word for it, often serve to conceal one half of what is passing in their souls: that which you are pleased to distinguish in me by the name of magic, is nothing but a sort of transparency of mind, which allows its different sentiments, and opposing thoughts, to be seen without labouring to harmonize them; for that harmony, when it exists, is almost ever coined—most genuine characters being by nature inconsequent—but it is not of myself I wish to speak, but of that unfortunate nation you so cruelly attack. Can it be my affection for my friends which has inspired you with this bitter malevolence? You know me too well to be jealous of me; indeed I have not the vanity to believe that a sentiment of this description could have sufficient power to transport you to such a degree of injustice. You repeat the opinion of every other foreigner upon the Italian character, when

drawn from first impressions ; but it requires deeper penetration, and a more patient scrutiny, to be able to form a correct judgment upon this country, which, at different epochs, has been so great. Whence comes it that this nation, under the Romans, has attained the highest military character in the world ? that it has been the most jealous of its liberties, in the republics of the middle age, and, in the sixteenth century, the most illustrious in literature, and the arts and sciences ? Has she not pursued glory under every form ? And if now, alas ! she can boast of none, why do you not rather accuse her political situation, since, in other circumstances, she has shewn herself different ?

“ I know not whether I deceive myself ; but the wrongs of the Italians inspire me with no other sentiment than pity for their lot. Foreigners have, in every age, conquered, and torn asunder this beautiful

country, the perpetual object of their ambition; and yet shall foreigners bitterly reproach this nation, with the wrongs of a conquered and dismembered country? Europe is indebted to the Italians for the arts and sciences; and shall Europe, turning their own benefits against them, dispute with her benefactors, the only species of renown which can distinguish a nation, without either military strength, or political liberty?

“ It is so true, that nations derive their character from the nature of their government, that in this same Italy, we behold a difference of manners, remarkable in the different states that compose it. The Piedmontese, who formed a little national body, have a more martial spirit than all the rest of Italy; the Florentines, who have had the good fortune either to enjoy their liberty, or to be governed by liberal princes, are mild and enlightened; the Vene-

tians, and the Genoese, discover a genius for politics, because their government is a republican Aristocracy ; the Milanese are remarkable for their sincerity, which character they have long since derived from the nations of the north ; the Neapolitans might easily become a warlike people, since, after having, during several centuries, been governed by an imperfect Dynasty, they have been, at length, united under a government of their own. The Roman nobility being totally unoccupied with either military or political pursuits, must, by consequence, become indolent and uninformed ; but the ecclesiastics, having a career of emulation open before them, are much more enlightened, and cultivated, than the nobles, and as the papal government admits of no distinction of birth, and is purely elective in the clerical body, it begets a sort of liberality, not only in thinking, but in acting, which renders

Rome a most agreeable abode for those who have neither the prospect, nor the ambition of worldly eminence.

“ The nations of the south more easily receive the impression of their political establishment than those of the north; they possess an indolence which soon softens into resignation, and nature offers them so many enjoyments, that they are easily consoled for the loss of those which society refuses them. There is certainly much depravity in Italy, and, nevertheless, civilization is here in a state of refinement, much inferior to that of other countries. There is almost something savage in the character of the Italians, notwithstanding their intellectual acuteness, which too much resembles that of the hunter in the art of surprising his prey. And indolent people easily acquire a cunning character, from that habitual calmness which serve them, upon occasion, to dissimulate

even their wrath: it is always by habitual manners that we succeed in concealing the accidental variations of the mind.

“ The Italians are sincere and faithful in the private intercourse of life. Interest and ambition exercise considerable sway among them; but pride and vanity none: the distinctions of rank produce little impression. They have no fashionable society, no leaders of the ton, no little daily methods of giving effect to minute circumstances. These habitual sources of dissimulation and envy exist not among them. When they deceive their enemies, and their rivals, it is because they consider themselves in a state of warfare with them; but, in other circumstances, they are frank and ingenuous. It is this ingenuousness alone that has scandalised you, respecting our women; who, hearing love constantly spoken of, and surrounded by its seduc-

tions and examples, conceal not their sentiments, and, if it may be so expressed, give, even to gallantry, a character of innocence; besides, they have no ridicule to dread from that society in which they live. Some of them are so ignorant, that they cannot write, this they publicly avow, and answer a billet by means of their *paglietto*, in great form. But, to make amends for this, among those who are well educated, you will find academy professors, who give public lessons in a black scarf; and should this excite a smile, you would be answered, ‘Is there any harm in knowing Greek? Is there any harm in subsisting by our own exertions? If not, what is it provokes your mirth?’

“But now, my lord, allow me to touch upon a more delicate subject; allow me to enquire the cause that our men display so little military ardour. They expose their live

freely, when impelled by love and hatred ; and the slaughter of the stiletto, in such a cause, excites neither astonishment nor dread. They fear not death, when natural passions bid them brave its terrors ; but often, it must be owned, they prefer life to political interests, which seldom affect them, because they possess no national independence. Often, too, that notion of honour, which descends to us from the age of chivalry, has little power in a nation where opinion, and society, by which opinion is formed, does not exist ; it is a natural consequence of this disorganization of every public authority, that women should attain that ascendancy which they here possess over the men, perhaps in too high a degree to respect and admire them. Nevertheless, the conduct of the men, towards the women, is full of delicacy and attention. The domestic virtues in England consti-

tute female happiness; but there are countries where love exists out of the sacred pale of marriage: among these countries, that where female happiness excites the greatest attention and care, for its preservation, is Italy. The men, here, have invented moral duties for relations, beyond the bounds of morality itself; but, at least in the division of these duties, they have been both just and generous: they consider themselves more guilty than women, when they break the ties of love; because the latter have made the greater sacrifices in the formation of those ties. They conceive, that before the tribunal of the heart, he is the most guilty who does the most injury. Men do wrong for want of feeling; but women through weakness of character. That society, which is at once rigorous and depraved—that is to say, without pity for errors, when they entail misfortunes, must be very severe

upon women ; but in a country which has no regular society, natural goodness of heart has freer exercise.

Ideas of consideration and dignity are, I agree, less powerful, and even less known, in Italy than any where else : the want of a society, and public opinion, is the cause of it : but, notwithstanding all that may be said of the perfidy of the Italians, I maintain, that there is not a country in the world where more sincerity is to be found. So far is this sincerity from being checked by vanity, that, notwithstanding they stand most obnoxious to the obloquy of other nations, there is no people who receive foreigners so kindly. The Italians are reproached with being too much inclined to flattery ; but it must be allowed, in their favour, that, generally, they lavish their soft expressions, not from design, but a real desire to please ; nor can it be alleged, that these expressions are

ever falsified by their conduct. But it may be asked, would they be steady to their friends, in extraordinary circumstances, in which it might be necessary to brave for them the perils of adversity? A very small number, I must own, would be capable of such friendship; but this observation will not apply to Italy alone.

“ The Italians are remarkable for that lassitude which distinguishes the eastern nations; but there are no men more active and persevering, when once their passions are excited. These very women, too, whom you behold as indolent as the sultanas of a seraglio, upon some occasions, give most striking proofs of attachment. There is something mysterious in the character, and the imagination, of the Italians, in whom you will find by turns, either unexpected traits of generosity and friendship; or gloomy and

formidable proofs of hatred and revenge. They have no emulation, because life is, to them, only a pleasant summer's dream ; but give those men an incentive to public exertion, and you will see them, in six months, unrivalled in their apprehensions and conceptions. It is the same with women : what ambition can they feel, to excel in education, since the ignorance of the men render them insensible to its value ? By cultivating their minds, their hearts would become isolated ; but these very women would soon become worthy a man of superior mind, if such a man were the object of their tender affection.

“ Every great interest is here laid asleep ; but repose and carelessness, under such circumstances, are more noble than a busy anxiety about trifling concerns.

“ Even literature languishes in a country where thought is not renewed by the

strong and varied action of life.—But what nation has testified more admiration for literature and the fine arts than Italy? We are informed, by history, that the popes, the princes, and the people, have, at all times, paid to painters, poets, and distinguished writers, the most public homage. (16) This enthusiastic veneration of talent is, I confess, my lord, one of the first motives of my attachment to this country.—We do not find here imagination ridiculed, and mind discouraged;—nor do we find that despotic mediocrity of mind, which, in other countries, knows so well how to torment and stifle natural genius.—A happy idea, sentiment, or expression, sets an audience on fire, if I may say so. By the same rule that talent holds the first rank amongst us, it excites considerable envy; Pergolesi was assassinated for his *stabat*; Giorgioni armed himself with a cuirass

when he was obliged to paint in public ; but the violent jealousy which talent inspires amongst us, is that which, in other nations, gives birth to power. This jealousy does not degrade its object ; it may hate, proscribe, and kill, but it is, nevertheless, mingled with the fanaticism of admiration, and encourages genius, even in persecuting it. To conclude ; when we see so much life, in so confined a circle, in the midst of so many obstacles, and so much subjection of every kind, we cannot avoid, in my opinion, taking the deepest interest in a people who inhale, with so much avidity, the little air which the loopholes of imagination allow to enter through the walls that confine them.

“ That this confinement is such, I will not deny ; nor that men rarely acquire in Italy that dignity, that boldness, which distinguishes free and military nations.— I will even admit, my lord, if you choose,

that the character of such nations is capable of inspiring women with more love and enthusiasm. But might it not also be possible, that a noble and interested man, cherishing the most rigid virtues, might unite in his character every quality that can excite love, without possessing those which promise happiness.

“CORINNA.”

CHAP. IV.

CORINNA's letter made Oswald a second time repent the idea he had formed of detaching himself from her. The intellectual dignity, the attractive softness with which she repelled the harsh allegations he had made against her country, affected him deeply, and penetrated him with admiration. A superiority, so grand, so simple, and so true, appeared to him above all ordinary rules. He felt that Corinna was not the weak, timid woman, without an opinion on any subject beyond the sphere of her pri-

vate duties and sentiments, which he had chosen, in his imagination as a partner for life. The remembrance of Lucilia, such as he had beheld her, at the age of twelve years, agreed much better with this idea;—but could any woman be compared with Corinna?—Could any rules, by which we judge the female character, be applied to her, who united in herself so many different qualities, cemented by genius and sensibility? Corinna was a miracle of nature, and was it not a miracle worked in favour of Oswald, when he could flatter himself with interesting such a woman? But her real name and condition were unknown to him.—What would be her future projects, were he to avow his intention of uniting himself to her? All was yet in obscurity; and although the enthusiasm with which Corinna had inspired Oswald, made him desirous of espousing her; yet the idea that her life had not been wholly

irreproachable, and that such an union would certainly have been condemned by his father, threw his soul into confusion, and racked him with the most painful anxiety.

He was not now so sunk in grief, as before his acquaintance with Corinna; but he no longer felt that sort of calm, which may even accompany repentance, when our whole life is devoted to the expiation of a crime. Formerly, he was not afraid to abandon himself to his recollections, bitter as they were; but now he dreaded those long and profound reveries, which would have revealed to him what was passing at the bottom of his soul. In the mean time he prepared to visit Corinna, in order to thank her for her letter, and obtain pardon for that he had written to her, when Mr. Edgermond, a relation of young Lucilia, entered the room.

He was a worthy English gentleman, who had almost constantly resided in Wales, where he possessed an estate. He cherished those principles which, in every country, serve to maintain things as they are, and which have a most beneficial tendency, when things are as well as human reason will permit. When that is the case, such men as Mr. Edgermond, that is to say, the partizans of established order, though strongly, and even obstinately attached to their customs, and to their manner of thinking, ought to be considered as men of rational and enlightened minds.

Lord Nelville startled, when he heard Mr. Edgermond announced; every recollection of the past rushed upon him at once; but as it immediately occurred to his mind that lady Edgermond, the mother of Lucilia, had sent her relation to reproach him, and thus restrain his independence, this thought restored his firmness, and he

received Mr. Edgermond with great coldness. However, he injured his visitor by his suspicions, for he had not the least design in his head that regarded Nelville. He visited Italy for the sake of his health alone ; and ever since he had been in the country, he was constantly employed in hunting, and drinking King George and Old England. He was the most honest man in the world, and possessed a much better informed mind than his habits would induce many to believe : he was a downright Englishman—not only as he ought to be, but as people would wish he were not ; following, in every country, the customs of his own—living only with Englishmen, and never discoursing with foreigners ; not out of contempt to them, but from a sort of repugnance to foreign languages, and even a timidity, at the age of fifty, which rendered him very difficult in forming new acquaintances.

“ I am happy to see you,” said he to Nelville, “ I am going to Naples in a fortnight—should be glad to see you there, for I have not long to stay in Italy; my regiment will soon embark.” “ Your regiment !” repeated Lord Nelville, and blushed, as if he had forgotten that he had a year’s leave of absence, because his regiment was not to be employed before the expiration of that period.—He blushed at the thought, that Corinna could make him forget even his duty. “ Your regiment,” continued Mr. Edgermond, “ will not go upon service so soon; so stay here quietly, and get yourself about again: I saw my little cousin before I set out—she is more charming than ever—I am sure, by the time you return, she will be the finest woman in England.” Lord Nelville said nothing—and Mr. Edgermond was also silent. Some other words passed between them, very laconic, though extremely

friendly, and Mr. Edgermond was going, when, suddenly turning back, he said, “Apropos, my lord, you can do me a kindness—they tell me you are acquainted with the celebrated Corinna ; I dont much like forming new acquaintances, but I am quite curious to see this lady.” “Since you desire it, I will ask Corinna’s permission to introduce you,” replied Oswald. “Do so, I beseech you,” said Mr. Edgermond ; “and contrive to let me see her, some day, when she delivers extempore poetry, or dances and sings to the company.” “Corinna does not thus display her talents to strangers,” said Nelville ; “in private life, she is plain and simple in her manners as any other woman.” “Pardon my mistake,” said Mr. Edgermond, “as she is not known by another name than that of Corinna, and lives by herself, at the age of twenty-six years, unaccompanied by any part of her family

I thought she derived support from her talents." "Her fortune is entirely independent," answered his lordship, warmly, and her mind is still more so." Mr. Edgermond immediately dropped this subject, seeing that it interested Oswald. No men in the world have so much discretion, and delicate precaution, in what concerns the affections, as the English.

Mr. Edgermond went away. Lord Nelville, when alone, could not help exclaiming, with emotion, "I must espouse Corinna—I must become her protector, in order to preserve her from obloquy: she shall have the little it is in my power to bestow—a rank and a name; whilst she, on her part, will confer on me every earthly felicity." It was in this disposition that he hastened to visit Corinna, and never did he enter her doors with sweeter sentiments of hope and love; but, swayed by his natural timidity, he, in order to recover his confi-

dence, began the conversation with insignificant topics, and of this number was his request for permission to introduce Mr. Edgermond. At this name, Corinna was visibly agitated, and, with a faltering voice, refused what Oswald solicited. All astonishment, he said to her, "I thought, that in this house, to which so many are allowed access, the title of my friend would not afford a motive of exclusion." "Do not be offended, my lord," replied Corinna: "Believe that I must have very powerful reasons, not to consent to your desire." "And will you acquaint me with those reasons?" replied Oswald. "Impossible!" cried Corinna; "Impossible!" "So then ——" said Nelville. His emotion rendered him unable to proceed, and he was about to depart, when Corinna, all in tears, exclaimed, in English, "For God's sake do not leave me, unless you wish to break my heart!"

These words, and the tone of voice in which they were uttered, deeply affected the soul of Oswald, and he sat down again, at some distance from Corinna, supporting his head against a vase of alabaster, which embellished her apartment ; then, suddenly, he said to her, “ Cruel woman ! you see that I love you—you see that, twenty times a day, I am ready to offer you my hand and my heart ; yet you will not inform me who you are ! Do, Corinna ; do make me acquainted with your history,” repeated he, stretching his hand to her with the most moving expression of sensibility.”—“ Oswald !” cried Corinna ; “ Oswald ! you do not know the pain you give me. If I were mad enough to tell you all, you would no longer love me.” “ Great God !” replied he ; “ what have you then to reveal ?” “ Nothing that renders me unworthy of you,” said she ; “ but fortuitous circumstances, but former differences between our

tastes and opinions, which would no longer exist. Do not oblige me to confess who I am. Some day, perhaps—some day, should you love me sufficiently——Ah! I know not what I say,” continued Corinna; “you shall know all; but do not forsake me before you have heard it. Promise me that you will not, in the name of your father, who is now in heaven!” “Pronounce not that name,” cried Lord Nelville; “can you fathom his will respecting us? Think you that he would consent to our union? If you do, declare it, and I shall no longer be racked with doubts and fears. Some time or other, I will unfold to you my sad story; but behold the condition you have now reduced me to.” In effect, his forehead was covered with a cold sweat, his face was pale, and his trembling lips with difficulty articulated these last words. Corinna, seated by the side of Nelville, holding his hands in her’s, gently recalled him to himself. “My

dear Oswald," said she to him ; "ask Mr. Edgermond, if he has never been in Northumberland ; or, at least, if he has only been there within these five years past. Should he answer in the affirmative, he may then accompany you hither." At these words, Oswald looked steadfastly at Corinna, who cast down her eyes, and was silent. "I shall do as you desire me," said Lord Nelville, and went away.

On his return home, he exhausted conjecture upon the secrets of Corinna. It appeared, evidently, that she had passed a considerable time in England, and that her name and family must be known there. But what could be her motive for concealing them ; and if she had been settled in England, why had she left it ? These questions greatly disturbed the heart of Oswald. He was convinced that no stain would be found in her life ; but he feared a combination of circumstances might have ren-

dered her guilty in the eyes of others.— What he most dreaded, was her being an object of English disapprobation. He felt sufficiently fortified against that of every other country; but the memory of his father was so intimately connected with the love of his native country, that they grew and strengthened with each other.

Oswald having learnt of Mr. Edgermond, that he had been in Northumberland, for the first time, the preceding year, promised to introduce him to Corinna that evening. Oswald arrived at her house before him, and made her acquainted with the ideas that Mr. Edgermond had conceived respecting her, suggesting the propriety of convincing him how much he was in error, by assuming the most cold and reserved manners.

“If you permit me,” replied Corinna, “I will be the same to him as to every body else; if he desire to hear me, I will *impro-*

visate before him ; in fact, I will appear to him what I am, not doubting that he will perceive as much dignity of soul in this simple and natural behaviour, as if I were to put on an air of restraint, which would only be affected." "Yes, Corinna," replied Oswald, "you are in the right. Ah ! how much in the wrong is he who would, in the least, alter your admirable disposition !"

"At this moment, Mr. Edgermond arrived, with the rest of the company. At the commencement of the evening, Lord Nelville placed himself by the side of Corinna, and, with an interest which at once became the lover and the protector, he said every thing that could enhance her value. The respect he testified for her seemed to have more in view to command the attention of others, than to satisfy himself ; but it was with the most lively joy that he soon felt the inutility of all his inquietude. Co-

rinna entirely captivated Mr. Edgermond—she not only captivated him by her charms and graces, but in inspiring him with that sentiment of esteem which true characters always obtain of honest ones ; and when he presumed to express a wish to hear her upon a subject of his choice, he aspired to this favour with as much respect as eagerness. She consented, without waiting to be pressed for a moment, and thus manifested that this favour had a value, independent of the difficulty of obtaining it. But she felt so lively a desire to please a countryman of Oswald's, a man who, by the consideration which he merited, might influence his opinion in speaking of her, that this sentiment filled her, all on a sudden, with a timidity which was quite new to her. Often as she wished to begin, her tongue was suspended by the emotion she felt. Oswald was in pain, that she did not dazzle his English friend with all her su-

periority ; his eyes were cast down, and his embarrassment was as visible as that of Corinna, who, solely engrossed by the effect she wished to produce, continually lost the presence of mind necessary for an extempore effusion. At length, sensible of her hesitation, feeling that her words were the offspring of memory, and not of sentiment, and that thus she was neither able to paint what she thought, nor what she really felt, she stopped short, suddenly, and said to Mr. Edgermond, “ Pardon me, Sir, if, upon this occasion, timidity has deprived me of my usual facility ; it is the first time, as my friends can testify, that I have been beneath myself ; but perhaps,” added she, in sighing, “ it will not be the last.”

Oswald was deeply affected by the interesting failure of Corinna. ’Till then, he had always been accustomed to see imagination and genius triumph over her affections, and reanimate her soul at the moment

when she was most cast down ; but at this time, her mind was entirely fettered by feeling ; and Oswald felt such an interest in her fame, that he partook of the mortification of her defeat, instead of enjoying the sweet sensations which the cause of it was calculated to inspire. But as it appeared certain, that she would one day shine with her natural lustre, he yielded to the soft reflections that arose in his mind, and the image of his mistress was, more than ever, sovereign of his heart.

BOOK VII.

Italian Literature.

CHAP. I.

LORD Nelville felt a lively desire that Mr. Edgermond should enjoy the conversation of Corinna, which was more than equivalent to her extempore verses. The following day, the same company assembled at her house ; and to elicit her sentiments, he turned the conversation upon Italian literature, and provoked her natural vivacity, by affirming, that the English poets were much superior in energy and sensibility, to those of which Italy could boast.

“In the first place,” said Corinna, “strangers are, for the most part, acquainted only with our most celebrated poets—Dante, Petrarch, Ariosto, Guarini, Tasso, and Metastasio ; whilst we have several others, such as Chiabrera, Guidi, Filicaja, Parini, &c. without reckoning Sannazarius, Politian, &c. who have written in Latin, with as much taste as genius ; and all unite in their verses the utmost beauty of colouring and harmony ; all, with more or less talent, adorn the wonders of nature and art with the imagery of speech. Without doubt, our poets cannot pretend to that profound melancholy, that knowledge of the human heart, which characterise your’s ; but does not this kind of superiority belong, more properly, to philosophical writers than to poets ? The harmonic brilliancy of the Italian is more suitable to exterior objects than to meditation ; our language is better adapted to paint fury than sadness ; because

sentiments, which arise from deep reflection, demand more metaphysical expressions, whilst the desire of vengeance animates the imagination to the exclusion of grief. Cesarotti has produced the best and most elegant translation of Ossian, extant; but our lively Italian words form a contrast with the sombre ideas of the poem. We cannot help being charmed with our soft expressions,—*the limpid stream, the smiling plain, the cooling shade,* the same as with the murmur of the waves, and variety of colours: What more do you expect from poetry? Why would you ask of the nightingale, the meaning of her song? She can only answer you by resuming the strain, and you cannot comprehend it, without yielding to the impression which it produces. The measure of verse, harmonious rhymes, and those rapid terminations, composed of two short syllables, whose sounds

glide in the manner that their name (*Sdrucchioli*) indicates, sometimes imitate the light steps of a dance ; sometimes more grave tones, give an idea of the noise of a tempest, and the clangor of arms.—In fact, our poetry is a wonder of the imagination—we must only scrutinize it by remarking the various pleasures which it affords.”

“ It must be allowed,” replied Lord Nelville, “ that you explain very clearly the beauties and defects of your poetry ; but how will you defend your prose, in which those defects are to be found, unaccompanied by the beauties ? That which is only loose and indefinite in poetry, will become emptiness in prose ; and that crowd of common ideas which your poetry can embellish with their melody, and their images, are, in prose, cold and dry, while their vivacity of style render them more fatiguing.—The

language of the greater part of the prose-writers of the present day is so declamatory, so diffuse, and so abundant in superlatives, that their work seems bespoke in hackneyed phraseology, determined by contract; it does not once enter into their heads that to write well is to express our thoughts with clearness and perspicuity. Their style is an artificial web, a kind of literary mosaic, everything, in fact, that is foreign to their soul, and is made with the pen, as any other mechanical work is with the fingers. They possess, in the highest degree, the secret of developing, inflating, and putting every false construction upon an idea, and, if I may use the expression, of working a sentiment into froth. So much do they excel in this, that one would be tempted to ask these writers, what the African woman asked a French lady, who wore

a hoop :—“ *Madam, is all that a part of yourself?*” In effect, what real existence is there in all this pomp of words which would not dissolve before one true expression, like the fleeting shadow before the beams of the sun?”

“ You forget,” interrupted Corinna, sharply ; “ first, Machiavel and Boccace, next Gravina, Fibangieri ; and, in our days, Cesarotti, Verri, Bettinelli, and so many others, in short, who know how to write, and to think. (17) But I agree with you, that, in the latter ages, unfortunate circumstances having deprived Italy of its independence, its people have become, generally, without a relish for the simplicity of truth : from this has resulted the habit of sporting with words, without daring to approach a single idea. As they were certain of not being able to obtain any influence over affairs by their writings,

they were only employed to display their wit, which is a sure way to end in having no wit at all; for it is only in directing the mind towards some noble object that ideas are acquired. When prosaic writers can no longer, in any way, influence the happiness of a nation—when they only write to dazzle—when, in fact, the road itself is the object of their journey, they indulge in a thousand windings without advancing a step. The Italians, it is true, are afraid of a new thought; but that is an effect of indolence, and not of literary baseness. In their character, their gaiety, and their imagination, there is much originality; and, nevertheless, as they take no pains to reflect, their general ideas do not soar above mediocrity; their eloquence even, so animated when they speak, has no fire when they write; one would say, that labour of any kind freezes their faculties; it may also be

added, that the nations of the South are fettered by prose, and that poetry alone can express their real sentiments. It is not thus in French literature," said Corinna, addressing herself to the Count d'Erfeuil—"your prosaic writers are often more eloquent, and even more poetic, than your poets."—"It is true," answered the Count, "your assertion can be verified by truly classical authorities:—Bossuet, La Bruyere, Montesquieu, and Buffon, cannot be excelled; more particularly the first two, who are of the age of Louis the fourteenth, in whose praise too much cannot be said, for they are perfect models of imitation. They are models that foreigners ought to be as eager to imitate as the French themselves."—"I can hardly think it desirable," answered Corinna, "for the whole world entirely to lose their national colouring, as well as all originality of sentiment and

genius; and I am bold enough to tell you, Count, that, even in your country, this literary orthodoxy, if I may so express myself, will, in time, render your literature extremely barren. Genius is essentially creative; it bears the character of the possessor. Nature, who has not formed two leaves alike, has infused a still greater variety into the human soul; imitation is therefore a species of death, since it deprives every being which it affects, of its natural existence."

"You would not wish, fair stranger," replied the Count, "that we should admit teutonic barbarism amongst us—that we should copy Young's Night Thoughts, and the *Concetti* of the Italians and Spaniards. What would become of the taste and elegance of our French style after such a mixture?" The Prince Castel Forte, who had not yet spoke, said—
"It seems to me that we all stand in

need of each other: the literature of every country discovers, to him who is acquainted with it, a new sphere of ideas. It is Charles the fifth himself who has said—that *a man who knows four languages, is worth four men.* If that great political genius judged thus, as it concerns the conduct of affairs, how much more true is it with respect to literature? Foreigners all study French; thus their horizon is more extended than that of your's who do not study foreign languages. Why do they not more often take the trouble of learning them?—They would thus preserve their own peculiar excellence, and sometimes discover that in which they might be deficient.”

CHAP. II.

“ You will confess, at least,” replied the Count d’Erfeuil, “ that there is one part of literature in which we have nothing to learn of any country. — Our drama is decidedly the first in Europe ; for I cannot believe that the English would presume to oppose their Shakespeare to us.” — “ I beg your pardon,” interrupted Mr. Edgermond, “ they have that presumption.” — and after this observation he was silent. — “ In that case I have nothing to say,” continued the

Count, with a smile, which expressed a kind of civil contempt: “Each one may think as he pleases, but for my part, I persist in affirming, that we stand the very first in the dramatic art. As to the Italians, if I may speak my mind freely, they do not appear to think that there is a dramatic art in the world.—With them the music is every thing, and the piece itself nothing. Should the music of the second act of a piece be better than the first, they begin with the second act. Or should a similar preference attach to the first acts of two different pieces, they will perform these two acts in the same evening, introducing between, perhaps, an act of some comedy in prose, whose highest merit will be found not to go beyond the very refuse of the French literature. Your poets are entirely at the disposal of your famous musicians; one declares that he cannot sing without there

s in his air the word *felicità*; the tenor must have *tomba*; while a third singer can only quaver upon the word *catene*. The poor bard must make these different whims agree with dramatic situation as well as he can. This is not all; there are actors who will not appear immediately treading the boards of the stage; they must first be seen in a cloud, or they must descend the lofty stairs of a palace, in order to give more effect to their *entrée*. When the air is finished, whatever may be the violent or affecting situation of his character, the singer must bow to the audience in acknowledgement of their applauses. The other day, in Semiramis, after the spectre of Ninus had sung his song, the representative of this ghastly personage made a low reverence to the pit, which greatly diminished his terrific effect.

“ They are accustomed, in Italy, to consider the theatre merely as a large assembly room, where there is *nothing to hear but the ballet*. I am justified in saying nothing to *hear*; for it is only when the ballet is about to begin, that silence is called for in the pit: and what is this ballet but a chef d'œuvre of bad taste? There is nothing amusing in their dancing but the ridiculous part of it, for it is only the grotesque that affords entertainment, being, really, a good specimen of caricature. I have seen Gengis-kan, in a ballet, all covered with ermine, and full of fine sentiments; for he ceded his crown to the child of a king whom he had conquered, and lifted him up in the air upon one foot; a new mode of establishing a monarch upon his throne. I have also seen the sacrifice of Curtius formed into a ballet of three cats, with divertisements. Curtius, in

the habit of an Arcadian shepherd, danced for a considerable time with his mistress ; then mounting a real horse, in the middle of the stage, plunged into the gulph of fire, made of yellow satin and gilt paper, which looked more like a suit of livery than an abyss. In fact, I have seen the whole Roman history, from Romulus to Cæsar, compressed into a ballet."

"What you say is true," replied the prince Castel-Forte, mildly ; "but you have only spoken of music and dancing, which do not comprise what we understand by the drama of any country." "Your tragedies," interrupted the Count d'Erfeuil, "are much worse, as well as all your theatrical pieces, which are not called *dramas, that end happily*: they unite more horrors, in the course of five acts, than the imagination could form a picture of. In one piece of this kind,

the lover kills the brother of his mistress in the second act; in the third he burns the brains of his mistress herself upon the stage; her funeral occupies the fourth; in the interval, between the fourth and fifth acts, the actor, who performs the lover, comes forward, and announces to the audience, with the greatest tranquillity in the world, the harlequinades which are to be performed on the following evening; and then, in the fifth act, shoots himself. The performers are quite in harmony with the *sang froid* and extravagance of these pieces: they commit all these horrors with the utmost calm. When a performer uses much action, they say he conducts himself like a preacher; for, in effect, there is more acting in the pulpit, than on the stage. It is very fortunate that these actors are so peaceable in their pathos; for as there is nothing interest-

ing, either in the piece or its situations, the more noise they made about it, the more ridiculous they would appear still might it be sufferable, were there any thing gay in this nonsense; but it is most stupidly dull and monotonous. There is in Italy no more comedy than tragedy; and here, again, we stand foremost. The only species of comedy peculiar to Italy, is harlequinade. A valet, at once a knave, a glutton, and a coward; an old gripping, amorous dupe of a guardian, compose the whole strength of these pieces. I hope you will allow, that the *Tartuffe*, and the *Misanthrope*, require a little more genius than such compositions."

This attack of the Count d' Erfeuil, was sufficiently displeasing to the Italians, who were his auditors; nevertheless they laughed at it. The Count was more desirous of shewing his wit, than his natural goodness of disposition; for

though this latter quality influenced his actions, self-love guided his speech. The prince Castel-Forte, and the rest of his countrymen present, were extremely impatient to refute the Count d'Erfeuil ; but as they were little ambitious of shining in conversation, and believed their cause would be more ably defended by Corinna, they besought her to reply, contenting themselves with barely citing the celebrated names of Maffei, Metastasio, Goldoni, Alfieri, and Monti. Corinna began by granting that the Italians had no drama ; but she undertook to prove, that circumstances, and not want of talent, were the cause of it. Comedy, which depends upon the observation of manners, can only exist in a country where we live in the midst of a numerous and brilliant society. In Italy we meet with nothing but violent passions, or lazy enjoyments, which produce crimes

of so black a hue, that no shades of character can be distinguished. But ideal comedy, to use the expression, which depends upon the imagination, and may agree with all times, and all countries, owes its invention to Italy. Harlequin, punchinello, pantaloon, &c. have the same character in every different piece. In all cases they exhibit masks, and not faces: that is to say, their physiognomy is that of some particular species of character, and not that of any individual. Undoubtedly, the modern authors of harlequinades, finding every part ready carved out for them, like the men of a chess-board, have not the merit of their invention, which is due to Italy; therefore, as these fantastic personages, which, from one end of Europe to the other, afford amusement to every child, and to every grown-up person, whom imagination has rendered childish, must certainly

be considered of Italian creation : this, I should conceive, ought to give them some claim to the art of comedy.

The observation of the human heart is an inexhaustible source of literature ; but nations more disposed to poetie thought, than to reflection, more easily assimilate with the extravagance of mirth than with philosophic irony. That pleasantry which is founded upon the knowledge of mankind has something sad at bottom. It is only the gaiety of the imagination which is truly inoffensive. It is not that the Italians do not study deeply the men whom they have to do with ; for none discover more subtly their secret thoughts ; but they employ this talent as a guide of conduct, and have no idea of converting it to any literary purpose. Perhaps, even they have no wish to generalize their discoveries, and publish their perceptions. There is a pru-

dent dissimulation in their character, which teaches them not to expose, in comedies, that which affords rules for private intercourse ; not to reveal, by the fictions of the mind, what may be useful in circumstances of real life.

Machiavel, however, far from concealing any thing, has exposed all the secrets of a criminal policy ; and through him we may learn of what a terrible knowledge of the human heart the Italians are capable. But profound observation is not the province of comedy : the leisure of society, properly speaking, can alone furnish matter for the comic scene. Goldoni, who lived at Venice, where there is more society than in any other Italian city, has introduced into his pieces, more refinement of observation than is generally to be found in other authors. Nevertheless, his comedies are monotonous, and we meet with the same situations in

them, because they contain so little variety of character. His numerous pieces seem formed upon the general model of dramatic works, and not copied from real life. The true character of Italian gaiety is not satire, but imagination; not delineation of manners, but poetical exaggeration. It is Ariosto, and not Moliere, who can amuse Italy.

Gozzi, the rival of Goldoni, has more originality in his compositions; they bear less resemblance to regular comedy. His determination was liberally to indulge the Italian genius; to represent fairy tales, and mingle buffoonery and harlequinade with the marvellous of poetry; to imitate nothing in nature; but to give free scope to the gay illusions of fancy, to the chimeras of fairy magic, and to transport the mind, by every means, beyond the boundaries of human action. He was crowned with prodigious success in his time, and

perhaps there never existed an author more congenial to an Italian imagination; but to know, with certainty, what degree of perfection Tragedy and Comedy can reach in Italy, it should possess a theatrical establishment. The multitude of little cities who all wish to have a theatre, lose by dispersing them, its dramatic resources: that division in states, in general so favourable to liberty and happiness, is hurtful to Italy. It must have a concentration of its light and its power to resist the prejudices which devour it. The authority of governments often represses individual energy. In Italy this authority would be a benefit, if it struggled against the ignorance of separate states, and of men isolated in themselves; if it combated, by emulation, that indolence so natural to the climate; and if, in a word, it gave life to this whole nation, which now is satisfied with a dream.

These ideas, and several others beside, were ingeniously unfolded by Corinna. She understood, well, the rapid art of light conversation, which does not dogmatically insist upon any thing: as well as that pleasing address which gives a consideration to each of the company in turn, though she often indulged in that kind of talent which rendered her a celebrated improvisatrix. Several times she intreated the Prince Castel-Forte to assist her with his opinion on the same subject; but she handled it so ably herself, that all the audience were delighted in listening to her, and would not suffer her to be interrupted. Mr. Edgermond, in particular, could scarcely satisfy himself with seeing and hearing Corinna; hardly did he dare to express the admiration she inspired him with, and he pronounced some words of panegyric, in a low tone of voice, hoping she would comprehend them without obliging him

to address her personally. He however possessed such a lively desire to know her sentiments on Tragedy, that in spite of his timidity he ventured a few words on that subject.

“ Madam,” said he to Corinna, “ where the Italian literature appears to me most defective is in Tragedy ; methinks the distance is not so great between infancy and manhood, as between your Tragedies and ours ; for in the sensibility of infants may be discovered some dawning of sentiment ; but there is something affected and extravagant in Italian Tragedy, which destroys all emotion whatever. Is it not true Lord Nelville,” continued Mr. Edgermond, turning to his Lordship and inviting his support, with a look, quite astonished at having found courage to speak in such a numerous assembly.

“ I am entirely of your opinion,” answered Oswald ; “ Metastasio, who is

vauntingly called the poet of love, gives the same colouring to this passion in every country, and under every circumstance. His admirable airs are entitled to our applause, as much from their grace and harmony, as the lyrical beauties which they contain, especially when detached from the drama in which they are placed ; but it is impossible for us, who possess Shakespear, who has most correctly fathomed the history and the passions of man, to approve of those amorous couples, who divide between them almost all the pieces of Metastasio alike, under the names of Achilles, of Tircis, of Brutus, and of Corilas, singing, in a manner that hardly touches the superficies of the soul, - the grief and sufferings of love, so as almost to reduce the noblest passion that animates the human heart to imbecility. It is with the most profound respect for the character of Alfieri, that I shall indulge in a few reflections

upon his pieces. Their aim is so noble, the sentiments which the author expresses so much in unison with his personal conduct, that his tragedies must always deserve praise as actions, even when they are criticised as literary performances. But I find in the vigour of some of his tragedies, as much monotony as in the tameness of Metastasio. There is, in the plays of Alfieri, such a profusion of energy and magnanimity, or rather such an exaggeration of violence and crime, that it is impossible to discover in them the real character of man. He is never so wicked, or so generous, as painted by this author. The aim of most of his scenes is to place virtue and vice in contrast with each other ; but these oppositions are not according to the gradations of truth. If tyrants, during their life, bore with what the oppressed are made to say to their face in the tragedies of Alfieri, one would be almost tempted

to pity them. His piece of Octavia is one of those, where the want of probability is most striking. In this piece, Seneca moralises incessantly with Nero, as if the latter were the most patient of men, and Seneca the most courageous. The master of the world permits himself to be insulted, and his anger to be excited in every scene, for the amusement of the spectators, as if it were not in his power to end it all with a word. Certainly these continual dialogues give rise to some very fine replies on the part of Seneca, and one would be glad to find in an harangue, or in a moral work, the noble thoughts which he expresses; but is this the way to give us an idea of tyranny? It is not painting it in its formidable colours, but merely making it a butt for verbal fencing. But if Shakespeare had represented Nero, surrounded by trembling slaves, who hardly dared reply to the most indifferent question,

himself concealing his internal agitation, and endeavouring to appear calm, with Seneca near him, writing the apology for the murder of Agrippina, would not the terror have been a thousand times greater? And for one reflection spoken by the author, would not a thousand be generated in the soul of the spectators by the very silence of rhetoric, and the truth of the picture?"

Oswald might have spoken much longer, without receiving any interruption from Corinna: so much pleasure did she receive from the sound of his voice, and the noble elegance of his language, that she could have wished to prolong this impression for hours together. Hardly could she remove her eyes, which were earnestly fixed upon him, even after he had ceased to speak. She turned them reluctantly to the rest of the company, who were impatient to hear her thoughts upon the Italian tragedy, and turning

to Lord Nelville:—"My Lord," said she, "it is not to combat your sentiments, that I reply, for they meet mine in almost every point: my only intention is to offer some exceptions to your rather too general observations. It is true, that Metastasio is rather a lyrical, than a dramatic poet, and that he describes love like one of the fine arts that adorn life, not as the most important secret of our happiness and our pain. I will venture to say, notwithstanding our language has been consecrated to the cause of love, we have more profoundness and sensibility in describing any other passion than in this. The practice of making amorous verses has created a kind of common-place language amongst us for that subject; so that not what he has felt, but what he has read, inspires the bard. Love, such as it exists in Italy, by no means resembles that love which is

described by our writers. It is only in a romance of Boccacio *Fiametta*, which, according to the best of my recollection, there is to be found an idea of that passion, painted in colours truly national. Our poets subtilise and exaggerate the sentiment, whilst, agreeably to the real Italian character, it is a rapid and profound impression, which rather expresses itself, by silent and passionate actions, than by ingenious language. In general our literature is not characteristic of our national manners. We are much too modest, I had almost said too humble a nation to aspire to tragedies taken from our own history, and bearing the stamp of our own sentiments. (18)

Alfieri, by a singular chance, was transplanted, if I may use the expression, from ancient to modern times; he was born for action, and his destiny only permitted him to write; this constraint

appears in the style of his tragedies. He wished to make literature subservient to a political purpose; undoubtedly his object was noble; but nothing perverts the labours of the imagination so much as possessing one. In this nation, where are, certainly, to be met with, some erudite scholars, and very enlightened men, Alfieri was indignant at seeing literature consecrated to no serious end, but merely engrossed with tales, novels, and madrigals; Alfieri wished to give a more austere character to his tragedy. He has stript it of all the borrowed appendages of theatrical effect, preserving nothing but the interest of the dialogue. It appears to have been his wish to place the natural vivacity and imagination of the Italians, in a state of penitence; he has, however, been very much admired for his character, and the energies of his soul, which were truly great: and the

inhabitants of modern Rome are particularly given to applaud the actions and sentiments of their ancient country; as if those actions, and those sentiments, were at all interesting to them in their present state.

They are amateurs of ancient Roman independence, in the same manner as they are of the fine pictures which adorn their galleries. But it is not less true, that Alfieri has, by no means, created what may be called an Italian theatre; that is to say, tragedies of a merit peculiar to Italy. He has not even characterised the manners of those countries, and those centuries, which he has painted. His conspiracy of the Pazzi, his Virginia, and his Philip II. are to be admired for elevation and strength of thought; but it is always the character of Alfieri, and not that of peculiar nations, and peculiar times, which are to be discovered in

them. Although there be no analogy between the French genius and that of Alfieri, they resemble each other in this, that both of them give their own colouring to every subject of which they treat."

The Count d'Erfeuil, hearing the French genius called in question, was induced to speak. "It would be impossible for us," said he, "to tolerate, upon the stage, either the incongruities of the Greeks, or the monstrocities of Shakspeare; the French have too pure a taste for that. Our theatre is the model of delicacy and elegance: those are its distinguishing characteristics, and we should plunge ourselves in barbarism, by introducing anything foreign amongst us." "That would be like encompassing yourselves with the great wall of China," said Corinna, smiling. "There are certainly many rare beauties in your tragic authors;

but, perhaps, they would admit of new ones, could you bring yourselves to tolerate anything, not exactly French, on your stage. But as for us Italians, our dramatic genius would be greatly diminished in submitting to the fetters of those laws which we had not the honour of inventing, and from which, consequently, we could derive nothing but their restraint. A theatre ought to be formed upon the imagination, the character, and the custom of its nation. The Italians are passionately fond of the fine arts, of music, painting, and even pantomime; of every thing, in short, that strikes the senses. How then could they be satisfied with the austerity of an eloquent dialogue, as their only theatrical pleasure? Vainly has Alfieri, with all his genius, endeavoured to reduce them to it; he felt himself that his system was too rigorous. (19.)

The Merope of Maffei, the Saul of Alfieri, the Aristodemus of Monti, and, particularly, the poem of Dante, although this last author never composed a tragedy, seem calculated to convey an idea of what the dramatic art might be brought to in Italy. There is in the Merope of Maffei, a great simplicity of action; but the most brilliant poetry, adorned with the happiest images: and why should this poetry be forbidden in dramatic works? The language of poetry is so magnificent in Italy, that we should be more censurable than any other nation, in renouncing its beauties. Alfieri, wishing to excel in every department of poetry, has, in his Saul, made a most beautiful use of the lyric; so that music is necessary to the piece, not so much to harmonise the words, as to calm the phrensy of Saul with the harp of David. So delicious is our music, that it may even render

us indolent, as to intellectual enjoyments. Far, therefore, from wishing to separate music from the drama, it should be our earnest endeavour to unite them, not in making heroes sing, which destroys all dramatic effect, but in introducing chorusses, according to the ancient plan, or such other musical aid as may blend, naturally, with the situations of the piece, agreeably to the general current of things in real life. So far from retrenching the pleasures of the imagination, in Italian theatricals, it is my opinion, that we should, on the contrary, augment and multiply them in every possible manner. The exquisite taste of the Italians for music, and for shewy ballets, is an indication of the power of their imagination, and manifests the necessity of rendering even the most serious subjects interesting to them, instead of heightening their severity as Alfieri has done. The nation

conceive it their duty to applaud what is grave and austere ; but they soon return to their natural taste ; however, tragedy might become highly pleasing to them if it were embellished by the charm and the variety of different kinds of poetry, and with all the divers theatrical attractions, which the English and the Spaniards enjoy.

“ The *Aristodemus* of Monti has something in it of the terrible pathetic of Dante ; and, surely, this tragedy is very justly one of the most admired. Dante, that great master of various powers, possessed that kind of tragic genius, which would have produced the most effect in Italy, if it could, in any way, be adapted to the stage ; for that poet knew how to represent to the eye, what was passing at the bottom of the soul, and his imagination could make grief seen and felt. If Dante had writ-

ten tragedies, they would have been as striking to children as to men, to the illiterate crowd as to the polished few. Dramatic literature ought to be popular; like some public event, the whole nation ought to be competent to judge of it."

"When Dante was living," said Oswald, "the Italians performed a distinguished part in the political drama of Europe. Perhaps it would now be impossible for you to have a national tragic theatre: it would be necessary for the existence of such a theatre, that great circumstances should develop in life those sentiments which are expressed upon the stage. Of all the chefs-d'œuvres of literature, there is not one which depends so much upon the people as tragedy; the spectators contribute to it as much as the author. Dramatic genius is composed of the public mind; of the

history, the government, the manner, of every thing, in fact, which each day blends itself with thought, and forms the moral being, as the air which we breathe nourishes physical existence. The Spaniards, with whom you have some affinity, as to climate and religion, are much superior to you in dramatic genius; their pieces are composed of their history, their chivalry, and their religious faith, and these pieces possess life and originality; but their success, in this respect, is to be attributed to their historical glory. How then could it be possible, now, to establish, in Italy, that which it never could boast of—a genuine tragic muse?”

“It is, unfortunately, too possible that you may be in the right,” replied Corinna; “however, I expect better from the natural impulse of mind in Italy, and from the individual emulation of my country-

men, even when not favoured by exterior circumstances; but what we most want, in the tragical department, are actors. Affected words necessarily lead to false declamation; but there is no language in which an actor can display so much talent as in ours; for the melody of sound gives a new charm to propriety of accent: it is a continual music, which mingles with the expression of feeling, without diminishing its vigour." "If you wish," interrupted the prince Castel-Forte, "to convince the company of what you assert, it only remains with you to give the completest demonstration of it: yes, allow us to enjoy the inexpressible pleasure of seeing you perform tragedy; you must grant these foreign gentlemen the rare enjoyment of being made acquainted with a talent which you alone possess."

Corinna felt a secret desire to play

tragedy before Lord Nelville, and by this means shew herself to very great advantage; but she dared not accede to the proposal of the prince Castel-Forte, without the approbation of Oswald, which the look she cast upon him earnestly entreated. He understood them; and as he was, at the same time, concerned at that timidity which had, the day before, prevented the exertion of her extempore talent, and ambitious that she should obtain the applause of Mr. Edgermond, he joined in the solicitations of her friends. Corinna therefore no longer hesitated. "Well, then," said she, turning to the prince Castel-Forte, we will accomplish the project which I have so long formed, of playing in my own translation of *Romeo and Juliet*." "Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?" cried Mr. Edgermond; "you understand English, then?" "Yes," answered Corinna. "And you

are fond of Shakespeare?" added Mr. Edgermond. "As of a friend," replied she; "he was so well acquainted with all the secrets of grief." "And you will perform in Italian," cried Mr. Edgermond; "and I shall hear you! And you too, my dear Nelville. Ah, how happy you will be!" Then, repenting immediately this indiscreet word, he blushed: the blush of conscious delicacy is interesting to every one. "How happy *we* shall be," resumed he, a little embarrassed, "to be present at such a representation!"

CHAP. III.

EVERY thing was arranged in a few days, the parts distributed, and the evening chosen for the performance, in a palace belonging to a female relation of the prince Castel-Forte, and a friend of Corinna. Oswald felt a mixture of uneasiness and pleasure, at the approach of this new scene of triumph for the talents of Corinna. He enjoyed them by anticipation; but also was he jealous in the same manner, not of any man in particular, but of that whole audience in general who were to

witness the talents of her whom he loved : he wished to be the only witness of her mental charms ;—he wished that Corinna, timid and reserved, like an English woman, should possess eloquence and genius for none but him. However distinguished a man may be, perhaps he never enjoys, without alloy, the superiority of a woman ; if he feel an affection for her, his breast is disturbed ;—if not, his self-love is wounded. Oswald, with Corinna, was more intoxicated than happy ; and the admiration which she inspired him with, increased his love without giving more stability to his projects. He contemplated her as an admirable phenomenon, which appeared to him afresh every day ; but even the transport and astonishment which she made him feel, seemed to render the hope of a peaceful and tranquil life more distant. Corinna, however, was of the softest, and most easy disposition in pri-

vate life; her ordinary qualities would have made her beloved, independently of her brilliant ones; but once for all, she united in herself too much talent, and was too dazzling in every respect. Lord Nelville, with all his accomplishments, did not believe himself equal to her, and this idea inspired him with fears as to the duration of their mutual affection. Vainly did Corinna, by force of love, become his slave, the master, often uneasy about his captive queen, did not enjoy his empire undisturbed.

Some hours before the representation, Lord Nelville conducted Corinna to the palace of the princess Castel-Forte, where the theatre was fitted up. The sun shone most brilliantly, and from one of the windows of the stair-case, Rome, and the *Campagna*, were discovered. Oswald stopped Corinna a moment, and said, "Behold the splendor of that bright luminary, 'tis to

light up the torch of your fame that he shines." "Ah, if that were so," answered she, "it is you who would bring me happiness; it is to you that I should owe the protection of heaven." "Would the pure and gentle sentiments which the beauty of nature inspires, be sufficient to make you happy?" replied Oswald: "there is a great distance between the air that we breathe, the thoughtfulness which the country inspires, and that noisy theatre which is about to resound with your name." "Oswald," said Corinna, "if the applauses, which I am about to receive, have the power to affect me, will it not be because they are witnessed by you? And should I display any talent, will it not owe its success to you, who will have animated and inspired it? Love, poetry, and religion, all that is born of enthusiasm, is in harmony with nature; and, in beholding the azure sky, in yield-

ing to the impression which it causes, I have a more just comprehension of the sentiments of Juliet, I am more worthy of Romeo." "Yes, thou art worthy of him, celestial creature!" cried Lord Nelville; "'tis only a weakness of the soul, this jealousy of thy talents, this desire of monopolizing thy perfections. Go, receive the meed of public homage, go; but let that look of love, still more divine than thy genius, be directed to me alone!" They then parted, and Lord Nelville went and took his seat in theatre, awaiting the pleasure of beholding the appearance of Corinna.

Romeo and Juliet is an Italian subject; the scene is placed in Verona, where is still to be seen the tomb of those two lovers. Shakespeare has written this piece with that Southern imagination at once impassioned and pleasing; that imagination which triumphs in happiness, but which,

nevertheless, passes so easily from happiness to despair, and from despair to death. The impressions are rapid ; but it is easily felt, notwithstanding that they are indelible. It is the force of nature, and not the frivolity of the heart, which, beneath an energetic climate, hastens the developement of the passions. The power of the sun is not superficial, though vegetation be prompt ; and Shakespeare has seized, more happily than any other foreign writer, the national character of Italy, and that fecundity of the mind which invents a thousand ways of varying the expression of the same sentiments—the oriental eloquence which makes use of all the images of nature to paint what is passing in the heart. It is not as in Ossian, one same tint, one uniform sound which vibrates constantly on the most sensible chords of the heart ; the multiplied colours of Shakespeare, give not a cold affectation to his style ; it is the

ray divided, reflected, and varied, which produces these colours, in which we ever feel that fire they proceed from. There is a life and a brilliancy in this composition which characterise the country and the inhabitants. The piece of Romeo and Juliet, translated into Italian, would only seem to return to its mother tongue.

The first appearance of Juliet is at a ball, where Romeo Montague is introduced into the house of the Capulets, the mortal enemies of his family. Corinna was dressed in a festival habit, conformable to the costume of the times. Her hair was tastefully blended with precious stones, and artificial flowers. Her friends did not know her on her first appearance, till her voice discovered her: her figure then became familiar to them; but it was in a manner deified, and preserved a poetical expression. The theatre resounded with unanimous applauses upon her *entrée*.

Her first looks discovered Oswald, and rested upon him—a spark of joy, a lively and gentle hope, was painted in her countenance: in beholding her every heart beat with pleasure and fear: they felt that so much felicity could not last upon earth; was it for Juliet, or Corinna, that this presentiment was to be verified?

When Romeo approached to address her, in the beautiful lines of the play, upon her grace and beauty, the spectators, charmed to hear their own sentiments so finely interpreted, joined in the transport of Romeo; and the sudden passion which the first look of Juliet kindled in his soul, appeared like reality to every eye. Oswald from this moment felt disturbed; it appeared to him that Corinna was about to be proclaimed an angel among the women, that he should be forced to reveal his sentiment, that his claim would be disputed, and the prize ravished from

him—a kind of dazzling cloud seemed to pass before his eyes—his sight failed him—he was ready to faint, and retired, for some moments, behind a pillar. Corinna, uneasy at missing him, sought him with anxiety, and pronounced this line,

“ Too early seen, and known too late !”
with such a tone of voice, that Oswald started as he heard it, for it seemed to him to be applied to their personal situation.

He could never feel tired of admiring the grace of her actions, the dignity of her motions, and the expression of her countenance, in which was painted all that language could not reveal, all those mysteries of the heart, which cannot be reduced to words ; but which, nevertheless, dispose of our life. The accent, the look, the least action of a performer, truly inspired, and influenced by genuine emotion, is a continual revelation of the human heart, in which consists all the

ideal part of the fine arts. The harmony of the verse, and the charms of the varied attitude, give to the representation of the passion that grace and dignity which it often wants in the reality. Thus every sentiment of the heart, and every emotion of the soul, is refined, by passing through the imagination without losing its real substance.

In the second act, Juliet appears in the balcony, to converse with Romeo. Corinna had preserved, of her former ornaments, only the flowers, and those were soon to disappear: the theatre half-lighted, to represent night, cast a milder reflection upon the countenance of Corinna. There was now something more melodious in her voice, than when surrounded with the splendor of a *fête*. Her hands lifted towards the stars, seemed to invoke the only witnesses worthy of hearing her, and when she repeated, “*Romeo! Romeo.*”

although Oswald was certain that she thought of him, he felt jealous that these delicious accents should make the air resound with any other name than his. Oswald was seated opposite the balcony, and he who performed Romeo being a little concealed by the darkness of the scene, Corinna was enabled to fix her eyes upon Oswald in pronouncing these lines :

“ In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond ;
 “ And therefore thou may'st think my behaviour light ;
 “ But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
 “ Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
 “ * * * * * * * *
 “ * * * * * * * *
 “ * * * * therefore pardon me.”

At these words—“ Pardon me ! Pardon me for loving ; pardon me for having let you know it !”—There was in Corinna's look, so tender a prayer, and so much respect for her lover, so much exultation

in her choice, when she said, “ Noble Romeo ! Fair Montague ! ” that Oswald felt as proud as he was happy. He raised his head, which tenderness had bowed down, and fancied himself the king of the world, since he reigned over a heart which contained all the treasures of life.

Corinna, perceiving the effect which she produced upon Oswald, became more and more animated, by that emotion of the heart which alone produces miracles ; and when, at the approach of day, Juliet thought she heard the song of the lark—a signal for the departure of Romeo, the accents of Corinna possessed a supernatural charm : they described love, and, nevertheless, one might perceive that there was something of religious mystery in them, some recollections of heaven, with a presage that she was shortly to return thither ; a kind of celestial melancholy, that of a soul exiled upon earth,

but which was soon to be called to its divine home. Ah! how happy was Corinna the day that she represented the part of Juliet before the lover of her choice; how many years, how many lives would appear dull, compared to such a day!

If Lord Nelville could have performed, with Corinna, the part of Romeo, the pleasure which she would have tasted would not have been so complete. She would have desired to wander from the text of the sublime bard, to speak the dictates of her own heart; perhaps even, her genius would have been confined by insurmountable timidity; she would not have dared to look at Oswald, for fear of betraying herself, and truth would have destroyed the charm of art; but how sweet was it to know that him she loved was present; when she experienced those elevated sentiments, which only poetry can inspire; when she felt all the charm of

tender emotions, without their real pain ; when the affection she expressed was neither personal nor abstracted ; and when she seemed to say to Lord Nelville, “ See how I am capable of loving.”

It is impossible, when the situation is our own, to be satisfied with ourselves : passion and timidity, alternately transport and check us—inspire us either with too much bitterness, or too much submission ; but to appear perfect, without affectation ; to unite calm to sensibility, which too frequently destroys it ; in a word, to exist for a moment in the sweetest reveries of the heart ; such was the pure enjoyment of Corinna in performing tragedy. She united to this pleasure that of all the plaudits she received ; and her look seemed to place them at the feet of Oswald, at the feet of him whose simple approval she valued more than all her fame. Corinna was happy, at least for a moment !

for a moment, at least, she experienced, at the price of her repose, those delights of the soul, which, till then, she had vainly wished for, and which she would ever have to regret!

Juliet, in the third act, becomes, privately, the wife of Romeo. In the fourth, her parents wishing to force her to marry another, she determines to take the opiate, which she receives from the hand of a friar, and which is to give her the appearance of death. All the motions of Corinna, her disturbed gait, her altered accent, her looks, sometimes animated and sometimes dejected, painted the cruel conflict of fear and love; the terrible images which pursued her at the idea of being transported alive to the tomb of her ancestors, and the enthusiasm of passion, which enabled a soul, so young, to triumph over so natural a terror. Oswald felt an almost irresistible impulse to fly to her aid. At one time she

lifted her eyes towards heaven, with an ardour which deeply expressed that want of divine protection, from which no human being was ever free. At another time, Lord Nelville thought he saw her stretch her arms towards him, to ask his assistance—he rose up in a transport of delirium, and then sat down immediately, brought to his senses by the astonished looks of those about him; but his emotion became so strong, that it could no longer be concealed.

In the fifth act, Romeo, who believes Juliet dead, lifts her from the tomb, before she awakes, and presses her to his heart. Corinna was clad in white, her black hair dishevelled, and her head inclined upon Romeo with a grace, and, nevertheless, an appearance of death, so affecting and so gloomy, that Oswald felt himself shaken with the most opposite impressions. He could not bear

to see Corinna in the arms of another, and he huddled at beholding the image of her whom he loved, apparently deprived of life; so that, in fact, he felt, like Romeo, that cruel medley of despair and love, of death and pleasure, which makes this scene the most agonising that ever was represented on a stage. At length, when Juliet awakes in this tomb, at the foot of which her lover has just immolated himself, when her first words in her coffin, beneath these funeral vaults, not inspired by the terror which they ought to cause, are,

“Where is my Lord? Where is my Romeo?”

Lord Nelville replied by deep groans, and did not return to himself, till Mr. Edgermond conducted him out of the theatre.

The piece being finished, Corinna felt indisposed from emotion and fatigue.

Oswald entered first into her apartment, where he saw her, supported in the arms of her women, still in the costume of Juliet, and, like Juliet, almost in a swoon. In the excess of his trouble, he could not distinguish whether it was truth or fiction, and throwing himself at the feet of Corinna, exclaimed, in English ;

“ Eyes look your last ! Arms take your last embrace.”

Corinna, still absent, cried : “ Good God ! what do you say ? are you going to leave me ? ” — “ No ; ” interrupted Oswald, “ I swear — ” At that instant the crowd of Corinna’s friends, and admirers, forced the door, in order to see her. Her eyes were fixed upon Oswald, listening with anxiety for what he was about to answer ; but there was no opportunity for further conversation between them, during the whole evening, for they were not left alone a single instant.

Never had the performance of a tragedy produced such an effect in Italy. The Romans extolled, with transport, the talents of Corinna, both as the representative of Juliet, and the translator of the piece. They said, that this was truly the species of tragedy which suited the Italians, which painted their manners, moved the soul in captivating the imagination, and gave effect to their beautiful language, by a style alternately eloquent and lyrical, inspired and natural. Corinna received all these praises with the sweetest air imaginable; but her soul remained suspended on the words "*I swear*,"—which Oswald had pronounced, when he was prevented by the entrance of the company from concluding his sentence: this word might in effect contain the secret of her destiny.

BOOK VIII.

The Statues and the Pictures.

CHAP. I.

AFTER the day which had passed, Oswald could not close his eyes during the night. He had never been so near sacrificing every thing to Corinna. He did not even desire to know her secret; or rather, before he was acquainted with it, he wished to contract a solemn engagement, to consecrate his life to her. Uncertainty seemed, for some hours, banished from his mind; and he took pleasure in composing, in his thoughts, the letter which he should write to her on the

morrow, and which would decide his fate. But this confidence in happiness, this reliance upon resolution, was of no long duration. His thoughts soon reverted to the past, he remembered that he had loved, much less, it is true, than he loved Corinna; and the object of his first choice could not be compared to her; but, nevertheless, it was this sentiment which had hurried him away to actions without reflection, to actions which had torn the heart of his father.—“ Ah! who knows,” cried he, “ whether he would not now feel equal pain, lest his son should forget his native country, and the duties which he owes it?”

“ Oh thou!” said he, addressing the portrait of his father, “ thou, the best friend I shall ever have upon earth, I can no longer hear thy voice, but inform me by this silent look, which yet retains such power over my soul, inform me

what I am to do, that now, at least, in thy celestial abode, thou mayest be satisfied with the conduct of thy son! Forget not, however, that want of happiness which consumes mortal man—be indulgent in heaven, as thou wert upon earth! I shall become better if I am allowed to taste of happiness; if I am permitted to live with this angelic creature, to have the honor of protecting, of saving such a woman.—Of saving her?” replied he suddenly; “and from what? From a life of homage, of fame, and of independence!”—This reflection, which originated in himself, terrified him like an inspiration of his father.

In conflicts of sentiment, who has not felt that kind of secret superstition, which makes us take our own thoughts for presages, and our sufferings for a warning from heaven? Ah! how bitter is the struggle between passion and conscience, in susceptible minds!

Oswald paced his chamber, under the most cruel agitation, sometimes stopping to look at the moon, which in Italy is so mild and so beautiful. The aspect of nature inspires resignation; but it is without effect upon a mind racked with uncertainty. The next day arrived without bringing any alteration to his distracted thoughts, and when the Count d'Erfeuil, and Mr. Edgermond, came to visit him, they were uneasy as to the state of his health, so much was he altered by the anxieties of the night. The Count d'Erfeuil was the first who spoke.—“It must be allowed,” said he, that yesterday's entertainment was charming. Corinna is a most admirable woman. I lost half her words; but I understood every thing from her voice, and her countenance. What a pity it is, that a rich lady should be possessed of this talent! For if she were in humbler

circumstances, and unrestrained as she is, she might embrace the stage as a profession; and to have an actress like her, would be the glory of Italy."

Oswald received a painful impression from this speech, and yet could not tell how to make it known. For there was that about the Count, that we could not be angry at what he said, even though it were disagreeable to our feelings. None but sensible minds understand those delicate precautions which they owe each other: self-love, so alive to every thing that affects itself, hardly ever thinks of the susceptibility of others.

Mr. Edgermond praised Corinna in the most becoming and flattering terms. Oswald answered him in English, in order to relieve the conversation about Corinna, from the disagreeable eulogiums of the Count. "I see I am one too many here," said the Count; "well I

will pay a visit to Corinna: she will not be sorry I dare say to hear my observations upon her acting yesterday evening. I have some advice to give her, too, upon minute matters; but these minute considerations are very essential to the effect of the whole: she is really so astonishing a woman, that one should neglect nothing to assist her in attaining perfection.—And besides,” said he, inclining towards Nelville’s ear, “I will encourage her to play tragedy more often: ’tis a certain way to get married by some foreigner of distinction, who may pass through this city. As to you and I, my dear Oswald, that idea does not concern us, we are too much accustomed to charming women to commit foolish things; but who knows? a German prince, or a Spanish grandee—” At these words Oswald rose up almost beside himself, and it is impossible to conceive what would have been the issue, if the Count

d'Erfeuil had perceived his emotion ; but he was so satisfied with his last reflection, that he tripped away lightly, not suspecting, in the least, that he had offended Lord Neville: had he known it, though he loved him as much as man could love another, he would certainly have remained. The brilliant valour of the Count, contributed still more than his self-love, to render him blind to his defects. As he was extremely delicate in every thing that regarded honour, he did not imagine that he could be wanting, with respect to sensibility ; and believing himself, not without reason, amiable and brave, he was pleased with his lot, and did not suppose there was, in life, any more profound way of thinking than his.

None of the sentiments which agitated Oswald had escaped Mr. Edgermond, and, when the Count d'Erfeuil was gone, he

said to him—"My dear Oswald, I take my leave,—I am going to Naples."—"Why so soon?" answered Nelville. "Because it is not good for me to stay here," continued Edgermond; "I am fifty years of age, and, nevertheless, I am not sure that Corinna would not make a fool of me."—"And even in that case," interrupted Oswald, "what would be the consequence?"—"Such a woman is not formed to live in Wales," replied Mr. Edgermond; "believe me, my dear Oswald, only English women are fit for English wives: it does not become me to give you advice, I need not assure you, that I shall not mention a word of what I have seen; but with all Corinna's accomplishments, I should say, with Thomas Walpole, *of what use is all that at home?* And, believe me, domestic accomplishments for women are every thing. Represent to yourself your beautiful Italian at home, and

alone, while you are hunting, or attending your duty in Parliament ; imagine her leaving you at dessert to get tea ready against you shall leave table ! Dear Oswald, depend upon it our women possess those virtues adapted to retirement, which are to be found no where else. The men in Italy have nothing to do, but to please the women ; therefore the more attractive they are the better. But with us, where men have active pursuits, women must be satisfied with the shade. That it would be a great pity to condemn Corinna to such a destiny, I freely acknowledge : I should be glad to see her upon the throne of England ; but not beneath my humble roof. My Lord, I knew your mother, whose loss was so much lamented by your worthy father : she was a lady in every respect like my young cousin. Such is the wife, which, were I at a proper time of life, I should choose. Adieu, my dear friend, do not be

offended at what I have said, for nobody can be a greater admirer of Corinna than I am, and I own to you that, after all, were I at your time of life, I doubt whether I could have fortitude sufficient to renounce the hope of becoming agreeable to her.”— In finishing these words, he took the hand of Oswald, squeezed it cordially, and departed without receiving a word in reply. But Mr. Edgermond comprehended the cause of his silence, and, satisfied with a squeeze of the hand from Oswald, in answer to his own, he went away, impatient himself to finish a conversation which was painful to him.

Of all that he had said, only one word had penetrated to the heart of Oswald; that was, the recollection of his mother, and his father’s profound attachment to her. He had lost her when he was only fourteen years of age, but he recollected her virtues with the most heartfelt reverence, as well as that

timidity and reserve which characterised them.—“ Fool that I am,” cried he, when alone, “ I wish to know what kind of wife my father destined for me, and do I not know it, since I can call to mind the image of my mother, whom he so tenderly loved? What do I want more? Why deceive myself in feigning ignorance of what would be his sentiments now, were it in my power to consult his will?” It was, however, a terrible task for Oswald to return to Corinna, after what had passed the evening before, without saying anything in confirmation of the sentiments which he had expressed. His agitation and his trouble became so violent, that it affected a wound in his breast, of which he had thought himself cured; but which now opened, and began to bleed afresh. Whilst his servants, in affright, called assistance from every part, he secretly wished for the termination of life, to terminate his woe.—

“ If I could die,” said he, “ after having seen Corinna once more, after having heard her again call me her Romeo !”—Tears rolled down his cheeks ; they were the first tears he had shed since the death of his father, for any other cause.

He wrote to Corinna, informing her of his accident ; and some melancholy words terminated his letter. Corinna had begun this day under the most deceitful auspices : happy in the impression she conceived she had made upon Oswald, believing herself beloved, she was happy ; nor did busy thought conjure up any reflection not in unison with what she so much desired. A thousand circumstances ought to have mingled considerable fear with the idea of espousing Lord Nelville ; but as there was more passion than foresight in her character, governed by the present, and not diving into the future, this day, which was to cost her so many pangs, dawned upon

her as the most pure and serene of her life.

On receiving Oswald's note, her soul was a prey to the most cruel feelings : she believed him in imminent danger, and set out immediately on foot, traversing the Corso, at the hour when all the city were walking there, and entered the house of Oswald, in face of all the first society of Rome. She had not taken time to reflect, and she had walked so fast, that when she reached the chamber, she could not breathe, or utter a single word. Lord Nelville conceived all that she had risked to come and see him, and exaggerating the consequences of this action, which in England would have entirely ruined the reputation of an unmarried woman, he felt penetrated with generosity, love, and gratitude, and rising up, feeble as he was, he pressed Corinna to his heart, and cried :—" My dearest love ! No, I never will abandon you ! After

having exposed yourself on my account ! When I ought to repair——” Corinna comprehended what he would say, and as she gently disengaged herself from his arms, interrupted him thus, having first enquired how he was:—“ You are deceived my lord ; in coming to see you, I do nothing that most of my countrywomen would not do in my place. I knew you were ill—you are a stranger here—you know nobody but me ; it is therefore my duty to take care of you. Were it otherwise, ought not established forms to yield to those real and profound sentiments, which the danger, or the grief of a friend give birth to ? What would be the fate of a woman if the rules of *bienséance*, permitting her to love, forbade that irresistible emotion, which makes us fly to succour the object of our affection ? But I repeat to you, my lord, you need not be afraid that I have exposed myself by coming hither. My age, and my

talents, allow me, at Rome, the same liberty as a married woman. I do not conceal from my friends that I am come to see you ; I know not whether they blame me for loving you ; but that fact admitted, certain I am that they do not think me culpable in devoting myself entirely to you."

In hearing these words, so natural and so sincere, Oswald experienced a confused medley of different feelings. He was moved with the delicacy of Corinna's answer ; but he was almost vexed that his first impression was not just ; he could have wished that she had committed some great fault in the eyes of the world, in order that this very fault, imposing upon him the duty of marrying her, might terminate his indecision. He was offended at this liberty of manners in Italy, which prolonged his anxiety, in allowing him so much happiness, without annexing to it any condition. He could have wished that honour had

commanded what he desired, and these painful thoughts produced new and dangerous effects. Corinna, notwithstanding the dreadful alarm she was in, lavished upon him the most soothing attentions.

Towards the evening, Oswald appeared more oppressed; and Corinna on her knees, by the side of his bed, supported his head in her arms, though she was herself racked with more internal pain than he. This tender and affecting care made a gleam of pleasure visible through his sufferings.—“Corinna,” said he to her, in a low voice, “read in this collection, which contains the thoughts of my father, his reflections on death. Do not think,” seeing the terror of Corinna; “do not think that I feel myself menaced with it. But I am never ill that I do not read over these consoling reflections; I then fancy that I hear them from his own mouth; besides, my love, I wish you to know what kind of

man my father was ; you will the better comprehend the cause of my grief, and of his empire over me, as well as all that I shall one day confide to you.”—Corinna took this manuscript, which Oswald never parted from, and, in a trembling voice, read the following pages.

“ Oh ye just ! ye beloved of the Lord ! you can speak of death without fear ; for you it is only a change of habitation, and that which you quit is perhaps the least of all ! Oh numberless worlds, which in our sight fill the boundless region of space ! unknown communities of God's creatures ; communities of his children, scattered throughout the firmament, and ranged beneath its vaults, let our praises be joined to yours ! We are ignorant of your condition, whether you possess the first, second, or third share of the generosity of the Supreme Being ; but in speaking of death or of life, of time past, or of time to come,

we assimilate our interests with those of all intelligent and sensible beings, no matter where placed, or by what distance separated from us. Families of people ! Families of nations ! Assemblage of worlds ! you say with us, Glory to the Master of the Heavens, to the King of Nature, to the God of the Universe ! Glory and homage to him, who, by his bare will, can convert sterility into abundance, shadow into reality, and death itself into eternal life.

“ Undoubtedly the end of the just is a desirable death ; but few amongst us, few amongst our forefathers have witnessed it. Where is the man who could approach, without fear, the presence of the Eternal ? Where is the man who has loved God unremittingly, who has served him from his youth, and who, attaining an advanced age, finds, in his recollections, no subject of uneasiness ? Where is the man, moral in all his actions, without ever thinking of the praise and the reward of opinion ?

Where is that man, so rare among the human species, who is worthy to serve as a model to all ? Where is he ? Where is he ? Ah ! if he exists amongst us, let our reverence and respect surround him, and ask.—O you will do wisely to ask to be present at his funeral, as at the sublimest of earthly spectacles : only arm yourself with courage, to follow him to that bed, so repulsive to our feelings, from which he will never rise. He foresees it ; he is certain of it ; serenity reigns in his countenance ; and his forehead seems encircled with a celestial aureolus : he says, with the apostle, *I know in whom I have believed* ; and this confidence animates his countenance, even when his strength is extinguished. He already contemplates his new country ; but without forgetting that which he is about to quit : he gives himself up to his Creator, and to his God, without forgetting those sentiments which have charmed him during his life.

“ Is it a faithful spouse, who, according to the laws of nature, must, of all his connections, follow him the first: he consoles her, he dries her tears, he appoints a meeting with her in that abode of felicity, of which he can form no idea without her. He recalls to her mind those happy days which they have spent together, not to rend the heart of a sensible friend, but to increase their mutual confidence in the goodness of heaven. He also reminds the companion of his fortunes of that tender love which he has ever felt for her; not to give additional poignancy to that grief which he wishes to soften, but to inspire her with the sweet idea that two lives have grown upon the same stalk; and that, by their union, they will become an additional defence to each other, in that dark futurity where the pity of the Supreme God is the last refuge of our thoughts. Alas! is it possible to form a just conception of all

the emotions which penetrate a loving soul at the moment when a vast solitude presents itself to our looks, at the moment when the sentiments, the interest upon which we have subsisted, during so many smiling years, are about to vanish for ever? Ah! you who are to survive this being, like unto yourself, whom heaven had given you for your support; that being who was every thing to you, and whose looks bid you an agonizing adieu, you will not refuse to place your hand upon an expiring heart, in order that its last palpitation may still speak to you, when every other language has failed! And shall we blame you, faithful pair, if you had desired that your mortal remains should be deposited in the same asylum? God of bounty awaken them together; or if one of them only has merited that favour, if only one of them must join the small number of the elect; let the other be informed.

of it; let the other perceive the light of angels at the moment when the fate of the happy shall be proclaimed, in order that he may possess one moment of joy before he sinks into eternal night.

“ Ah! perhaps we wander when we endeavour to describe the last days of the man of sensibility, of the man who beholds death advance with hasty strides, who sees it ready to separate him from all the objects of his affection.

“ He revives and resumes a momentary strength, in order that his last words may serve for the instruction of his children. He says to them—‘ Do not be afraid to witness the approaching end of your father and friend.—It is in obedience to a law of nature that he quits, before you, this earth, which he entered first. He teaches you courage, and, nevertheless, he leaves you with grief. He would certainly have wished to assist you a little longer with his

experience—to walk a little longer, side by side, with you, through all those perils with which your youth is surrounded; but life has no defence in the hour allotted for our descent to the tomb. Your family now will live alone in the midst of a world from which I am about to disappear; may you reap, in abundance, the gifts which Providence has sown in it; but do not forget that this world itself is only a transient abode, and that you are destined for another more permanent one. We shall, perhaps, see one another again; and in some other region, in the presence of my God, I shall offer for you, as a sacrifice, my prayers and my tears! O, then, love religion, which is so rich in promise! love religion, the last treaty of alliance between fathers and their children, between death and life!—Approach, that I may behold you once more!—May the benediction of a servant of God light on

you !"—Hedies!—"O, heavenly angels, receive his soul, and leave us upon earth the remembrance of his actions, of his thoughts, and of his hopes!" (20)

The emotion of Oswald and Corinna had frequently interrupted this lecture.—At length, they were obliged to give it up.—Corinna feared for the effects of Oswald's grief, which vented itself in torrents of tears, and suffered the bitterest pangs at beholding him in this condition, not perceiving that she herself was as much afflicted as he.—“Yes,” said he, stretching his hand to her, “dear friend of my heart, thy tears are mingled with mine. Thou lamentest with me that tutelary angel, whose last embrace I yet feel, whose noble look I yet behold; perhaps, it is thee whom he has chosen for my comforter—perhaps—” “No, no,” cried Corinna; “he has not thought me worthy of it.” “What is it you say?” interrupted Oswald. Corinna was alarmed at having

revealed what she so much wished to conceal, and repeated what had escaped her, in another form, saying—"He *would not* think me worthy of it!"—This phrase, so altered, dissipated the disquietude which the first had excited in the heart of Oswald, and he continued, undisturbed by any fears, to discourse with Corinna concerning his father.

The physicians arrived, and dissipated, a little, the alarm of Corinna; but they absolutely forbade Lord Nelville to speak till the wound in his breast was perfectly closed. Six whole days passed away and Corinna never quitted Oswald, and prevented him from uttering a word, gently imposing silence upon him whenever he wished to speak. She found the art of varying the hours by reading, music, and sometimes by a conversation of which the burden was supported by herself alone, animating her spirits as well in the serious

as the playful, and keeping up a continual interest. All this charming and amiable attention concealed that disquietude which, internally, preyed upon her, and which it was so necessary to conceal from Lord Nelville; though she herself did not cease one instant to be the martyr of it. She perceived almost before Oswald himself, what he suffered, nor was she deceived by the courage he exerted to conceal it; she always anticipated every thing that would be likely to relieve him; only endeavouring to fix his attention as little as possible, upon her assiduous cares for him. However, when Oswald turned pale, the colour would also abandon the lips of Corinna; and her hands trembled, when stretched to his assistance; but she struggled immediately to appear composed, and often smiled when her eyes were suffused with tears. Sometimes she pressed the

hand of Oswald against her heart, as if she would willingly impart to him the vital spark of her own existence. At length, her cares succeeded, and Oswald recovered.

“Corinna,” said he, to her, as soon as he was permitted to speak; “why has not Mr. Edgermond, my friend, witnessed the days which you have spent by my bedside? He would have seen that you are not less good than admirable; he would have seen that domestic life with you is a scene of continual enchantment, and that you only differ from every other woman, inasmuch as you add, to every female virtue, the witchery of every female charm. No, it is too much—this internal conflict which rends my heart, must cease. Corinna, thou shalt know my secrets, though thou concealest from me thine—and thou shalt decide upon our fate.”—

“Our fate,” answered Corinna, “if you feel as I do, is never to part. But, will you believe me that, till now, I have not dared even entertain a wish to be your wife. What I feel is very new to me : my ideas of life, my projects for the future, are all upset by this sentiment, which every day disturbs and enslaves me more and more. But I know not whether we can, whether we ought to be united!” —“Corinna,” replied Oswald, “would you despise me for having hesitated? Would you attribute that hesitation to trifling considerations? Have you not divined, that the deep and sad remorse which for two years has preyed upon me, could, alone, cause my indecision?”

“I have comprehended it,” replied Corinna; “had I suspected you of a motive foreign to the affections of the heart, you would not have been him

that I loved. But life, I know, does not entirely belong to love. Habits, recollections, and circumstances, create around us a sort of entanglement that passion itself cannot destroy. Broken for a moment, it will join again, and encircle our heart as the ivy twines round the oak. My dear Oswald, let us not appropriate to any epoch of our existence, more than that epoch demands. Nothing is now so absolutely necessary to my happiness as that you should not leave me. The terror of your sudden departure pursues me incessantly. You are a stranger in this country, and bound to it by *notié*. Should you go, all my prospects would fade,—you would leave your poor Corinna nothing but that grief which would bow her down to the grave. This beautiful climate, these fine arts, that poetical inspiration which I feel with

you, and now, alas! with you alone, would, for me, become dull and mute. I never awake but in trembling; when I behold the God of day, I know not whether his resplendent beams ought to light up the spark of pleasure in my soul, ignorant as I am whether this city still contain you within its walls——you, the leading star of my life! Oswald, remove this terror from my soul, and I will desire to know nothing beyond the delightful security that will give me.”——“You know,” replied Oswald, “that an Englishman can never abandon his native country, that war may recall me, that ——” “Oh, God!” cried Corinna, “are you going to prepare me for the dreadful moment?” and she trembled in every limb, as at the approach of some terrible danger.——“Well, if it be so, take me with you as your wife—as your slave——” But, suddenly recover-

ing herself, she said—"Oswald, you will not go without giving me previous notice of your departure, will you? Hear me: in no country, whatever, is a criminal conducted to execution without some hours being allotted for him to recall his scattered thoughts. It will not be by letter that you will announce this to me—but you will come yourself in person—you will hear me before you go far away! And shall I be able then——What you hesitate to grant my request?" cried Corinna. "No," replied he, "I do not hesitate; since it is thy wish, I swear that, should circumstances require my departure, I will apprize you of it before hand, and that moment will decide the fate of our future lives."—"It will!" said Corinna, and she left the room.

CHAP. II.

DURING those days which immediately followed the illness of Oswald, Corinna carefully avoided any thing that might lead to an explanation between them. She wished to render life as calm as possible; but she would not yet confide her history to him. All her remarks upon their different conversations, had only served to convince her, too well, of the impression he would receive in learning what she was, and what she had sacrificed; and nothing appeared more dreadful to her

than this impression, which might detach him from her.

Returning then to the amiable artifice with which she had before prevented Oswald from abandoning himself to passionate disquietudes, she desired to interest anew, his mind and his imagination, by the wonders of the fine arts, which he had not yet seen, and by this means retard the moment when their fate should be cleared up and decided. Such a situation would be insupportable, governed by any other sentiment than that of love; but so much is it in the power of love to sweeten every hour, to give a charm to every minute, that, however it needs an indefinite future, it becomes intoxicated with the present, and every day is filled with such a multitude of emotions and ideas, that it becomes an age of happiness or pain!

Undoubtedly it is love alone that can

give an idea of eternity; it confounds every notion of time; it effaces every idea of beginning and end; we believe that we have always loved the object of our affection; so difficult is it to conceive that we have ever been able to live without him. Separation, the more dreadful it appears, seems less probable; it becomes, like death, a fear which is more spoken of than believed—a future event which seems impossible, even at the very moment we know it to be inevitable.

Corinna, among her innocent stratagems to vary the amusements of Oswald, had still in reserve the statues and the paintings. One day, therefore, when Oswald was perfectly restored, she proposed that they should go together to see the most beautiful specimens of painting and sculpture that Rome contains. “It is a reproach,” said she to him, smiling, “not to be acquainted with our statues,

and our pictures ; so we will, to-morrow, commence our tour of the museums and the galleries.”—“ It is your wish,” answered Nelville, “ and I agree. But in truth, Corinna, you have no need of these foreign resources to retain me ; on the contrary, it is a sacrifice that I make, whenever I turn my eyes from you to any object whatever.”

They went first to the Museum of the Vatican, that palace of statues, where the human figure is deified by Paganism, in the same manner as the sentiments of the soul are now by christianity. Corinna directed the observation of Lord Nelville to those silent halls, where the images of the gods and the heroes are assembled, and where the most perfect beauty seems to enjoy itself in eternal repose. In contemplating these admirable features, and forms, the intentions of the Deity towards man, seems, I know not how, to be re-

vealed by the noble figure which he has been pleased to give him. The soul is uplifted, by this contemplation, to hopes full of enthusiasm and virtue ; for beauty is one and the same throughout the universe, and, under whatever form it presents itself, it always excites a religious emotion in the heart of man. What poetic language there is in those countenances where the most sublime expression is for ever imprinted,—where the grandest thoughts are clad with an image so worthy of them !

In some instances, an ancient sculptor only produced one statue during his life—it was his whole history.—He perfected it every day : if he loved, if he was beloved, if he received from nature, or the fine arts, any new impression, he adorned the features of his Hero with his recollections or his affections : he could thus translate to the countenance all the sentiments of the soul. That grief, which, in our mo-

dern times, in the midst of our social condition is so cold and so oppressive, contains all that is most noble in man ; and, in our days, he who has not suffered, could never have thought or felt. But there was, in antiquity, something more noble than grief—an heroic calm—the sense of conscious strength, which was cherished by free and liberal institutions. The finest Grecian statues have hardly ever indicated any thing but repose. Laocoon and Niobe are the only ones which paint violent grief and pain ; but it is the vengeance of heaven which they represent, and not any passion born in the human heart ; the moral being was of so sound an organization among the ancients, the air circulated so freely in their large bosoms, and the order politic was so much in harmony with the faculties, that troubled minds hardly ever existed then, as at the present day. This state discovers to us

many fine ideas, but does not furnish the arts, particularly sculpture, with those simple affections, those primitive elements, which can alone be expressed by the breathing marble. Hardly do we find any traces of melancholy ; a head of Apollo, at the Justinian palace, another of Alexander, dying, are the only ones in which the thoughtful and suffering disposition of the soul are indicated ; but, according to every appearance, they both belong to the time when Greece was enslaved. Since that epoch, we no longer see that boldness, nor that tranquillity of soul, which have produced, among the ancients, chefs-d'œuvres of poetry and sculpture composed in the same mind.

That thought which has nothing to nourish it from without, turns upon itself, analyses, labours, and dives into every interior sentiment ; but it has no longer that creative power, which supposes happiness, and that plenitude of strength which hap-

piness alone can give. Even the sarcophaguses, among the ancients, only recall warlike or pleasing ideas: in the multitude of those which are to be found at the museum of the Vatican, are seen battles and games represented in bass-relief on the tombs. The remembrance of living activity was thought to be the finest homage that could be rendered to the dead; nothing could weaken, nothing could diminish its strength. Encouragement and emulation were the principles of the fine arts as well as politics; they afforded scope for every virtue, and for every talent. The vulgar gloried in knowing how to admire, and the worship of genius was attended even by those who could not aspire to its rewards.

The Grecian religion was not, like christianity, the consolation of misfortune, the richness of misery, the future hope of the dying—it sought glory

and triumph ;—it, in a manner, deified man : in this perishable theology, beauty itself was a religious dogma. If the artists were called to paint the base and ferocious passions, they rescued the human form from shame. In joining to it some part of the animal figure, and to give to beauty its most sublime character, they alternately blended, in their statues, (as in the warlike Minerva, and in Apollo presiding over the nine muses) the charms of both sexes—strength and softness, and softness and strength ; a happy mixture of two opposite qualities, without which neither of the two would be perfect.

Corinna, continuing her observations retained Oswald some time before those sleeping statues, which are placed on the tombs, and which display the art of sculpture in the most agreeable point of view. She made him remark, that whenever statues are supposed to represent an

action, we feel, on stopping to behold them, a sort of astonishment which is, sometimes, painful. But statues asleep, or merely in the attitude of complete repose, offer an image of eternal tranquillity, which wonderfully accords with the general effect of a southern climate upon man. The fine arts appear there to be peaceful spectators of nature, and genius, which in the north agitates and disturbs the soul of man, seems, beneath a beautiful sky, only a principle of harmony.

Oswald and Corinna passed on to the hall, where are collected together the sculptured images of animals and reptiles; and the statue of Tiberius is found, by chance, in the midst of this court. This assemblage is without design. Those statues appear to have ranged themselves, of their own accord, about their master. Another hall enclo-

sed the dull and rigid monuments of the Egyptians; of that people whose statues resembled mummies, more than men; and who, by their silent, stiff, and servile institutions, seem to have assimilated, as much as possible, life to death. The Egyptians excelled much more in the art of imitating animals, than in representing men: the dominion of the soul seems to have been inaccessible to them.

After these come the porticos of the museum, where is seen, at each step, a new chef-d'œuvre. Vases, altars, ornaments of every kind, encircle the Apollo, the Laocoon, and the Muses. It is there that we learn to feel Homer and Sophocles: it is there that a knowledge of antiquity is awakened in the soul, which cannot be acquired elsewhere. It is in vain that we trust to the reading of history, to comprehend the spirit of nations; what we see inspires us with more ideas

than what we read ; and exterior objects cause in us a strong emotion, which gives that living interest to the study of the past, which we find in the observation of contemporary facts and events.

In the midst of these magnificent porticos, which afford an asylum to so many wonders of art, there are fountains, which, flowing incessantly, seem to tell us how sweetly the hours glided away two thousand years ago, when the artists who performed these chefs-d'œuvres were yet alive. But the most melancholy impression, which we experience at the Vatican, is in contemplating the remains of statues which are collected there : the trunk of Hercules, heads separated from the body, and a foot of Jupiter ; which indicates a greater and more perfect statue than any that we know. We fancy a field of battle before us, where time has fought with genius ; and these mutilated limbs

indicate the victory of the one, and the losses of the other.

After leaving the Vatican, Corinna conducted him to the Colossuses of Mount Cavallo; these two statues represent, as it is said, Castor and Pollux. Each of the two heroes is taming a fiery steed, with one hand. These colossal figures, this struggle between man and the animal creation, gives, like all the works of the ancients, an admirable idea of the physical power of human nature. But this power has something noble in it, which is no longer found in modern society, where all bodily exercises, for the most part, are left to the common people. It is not merely the animal force of human nature, if I may use the expression, which is observable in these chefs-d'œuvres. There seems to have been a more intimate union between the physical and moral qualities, among the

ancients, who lived, incessantly, in the midst of war, and a war almost of man to man. Strength of body, and generosity of soul, dignity of features, and boldness of character, loftiness of stature, and commanding authority, were ideas almost inseparable, before a religion, entirely intellectual, had placed the power of man in his mind. The human figure, which was also the figure of the gods, appeared symbolical; and the nervous colossus of Hercules, as well as every other ancient statue of this sort, do not convey vulgar ideas of common life; but an omnipotent and divine will, which shews itself under the emblem of a supernatural physical force.

Corinna and Lord Nelville finished the day with a visit to the shop of Canova, the greatest modern sculptor. As it was late when they got there, they were shewn it by torch light; and sta-

tues improve much in their effect by being seen in this manner. The ancients appear to have been of this opinion, since they often placed them in their Thermæ, where day could not enter. By the light of the flambeaux, the shadow being more full, softens the uniform lustre of the marble, and the statues appear as so many pale figures, possessing a more striking character of grace and life. There was, in the shop of Canova, an admirable statue, destined for a tomb, which represented grief leaning upon a lion, the emblem of strength. Corinna, in contemplating the figure of grief, thought she discovered in it some resemblance of Oswald, and the artist himself was struck with it; Lord Nelville turned about to avoid this kind of notice; but he said, in a low voice, to his fair companion, "Corinna, I was condemned to a fate like that which is here represented, when

I met with you ; but you have renovated my existence, and my heart, then a prey to the keenest regrets, is now filled with hope.

CHAP. III.

THE chefs-d'œuvre of painting were then all collected together at Rome, whose riches, in this respect, surpassed that of all the rest of the world. There could exist only one disputable point as to the effect produced by this collection, namely, whether the nature of the subjects, chosen by the Italian artists, afford a scope for all the variety, and all the originality of passion and character, which painting can express? Oswald and Corinna were of contrary opinions

in this respect; but this, like every other opposition of sentiment that existed between them, was owing to the difference of nation, climate, and religion. Corinna affirmed, that the most favourable subjects for painting were religious ones. She said, that sculpture was a pagan art, and painting a christian one; and that in these arts were to be found, as in poetry, the distinguishing qualities of ancient and modern literature. The pictures of Michael Angelo, the painter of the bible, and of Raphael, the painter of the gospel, suppose as much profound thought, as much sensibility as are to be found in Shakespeare and Racine: sculpture can only present a simple, energetic existence, whilst painting indicates the mysteries of reflection and resignation, and makes the immortal soul to speak in the bare power of transient colours. Corinna maintained also that historical

or poetical facts were rarely picturesque. In order to comprehend such subjects, it would often be necessary to preserve the practice of painters of old, and write the speech of each personage in a ribbon proceeding out of their mouth. But religious subjects are, at the same moment, understood by everybody, and attention is not removed from the picture to guess what it represents.

Corinna was of opinion that the expression of modern painters was often theatrical, and that it bore the stamp of their age, in which was no longer found, as in Andrew Mantegna, Perugin, and Leonard de Vinci, the unity and the nature which characterised the repose of the ancients; to which repose is joined that profundity of sentiment which is the characteristic of christianity. She admired the artless composition of Raphael's pictures, especially those in his first style of painting. All the figures are

directed towards one principal object, without any contrivance on the part of the artist to group them in various attitudes, in order to produce a laboured effect. Corinna said that this sincerity in the arts of the imagination, as well as in every other, is the true character of genius; and that studied efforts for fame are almost ever destructive of enthusiasm. She maintained that there was rhetoric in painting, as well as in poetry, and that all those who could not embody character, called every accessory ornament to their aid, uniting to the attraction of a brilliant subject, rich costumes, and remarkable attitudes, whilst a virgin, holding a child in her arms, an old man at mass, a man leaning on his stick, or Saint Cecilia, with her eyes lifted up to heaven, produced the deepest effect by the expression of the countenance alone. These natural beauties increase every day more and more in our estimation; but on

the contrary, in pictures done for effect, the first *coup d'œil* is always the most striking.

Corinna added to these reflections an observation which strengthened them : and which was, that the religious sentiments of the Greeks and Romans, and the disposition of their minds, in every respect being absolutely foreign from ours, it is impossible for us to create according to their conceptions, or to build upon their ground. They may be imitated by force of study ; but how can genius employ all its energies in a work where memory and erudition are so necessary ? It is not the same with subjects that belong to our own history, and our own religion. Here the painter may be inspired, he may feel what he paints, and paint what he has seen. Life assists him to imagine life ; but in transporting himself to the regions of antiquity, his invention must be guided by books and

statues. To conclude, Corinna found that pictures, from pious subjects, impart a comfort to the soul that nothing could replace; and that they suppose, in the artist, a sacred enthusiasm which blends with genius, renovates, revives, and can alone support us against the injustice of man and every other evil of life.

Oswald received, in some respect, a different impression. In the first place, he was scandalized to see the Deity represented as he is by Michael Angelo, in human form and feature. It was his opinion that thought alone could dare to give him shape and figure, and that hardly at the very bottom of the soul could be found a thought sufficiently intellectual, sufficiently ethereal to lift it to an idea of the Supreme Being; and as to subjects taken from the Holy Scripture, it seemed to him that the expression and the images left much to desire. He thought, with Corinna, that religious

meditation is the most intimate sentiment that man can feel; and, with this regard, it is that which furnishes the painter with the greatest mysteries of human physiognomy; but religion repressing every emotion of the heart, which does not proceed immediately from her, the figures of the saints and martyrs cannot admit of much variety. The sentiment of humility, so noble in the face of heaven, weakens the energy of terrestrial passions, and necessarily gives monotony to most religious subjects. When Michael Angelo applied his terrible genius to those subjects, he almost changed the essence of them, by giving to his prophets a formidable expression of power more becoming a Jupiter than a Saint. He often, like Dante, avails himself of the images of Paganism, and blends the heathen mythology with christianity. One of the most admirable circumstances attending the establishment of

christianity, is the vulgar condition of the apostles who have preached it, joined to the misery and debasement of the Jewish people, so long the depositaries of the promises of Christ. This contrast between the littleness of the means, and the greatness of the result, is, in a moral point of view, extremely fine; but in painting, which exhibits the means alone, christian subjects must be less dazzling than those taken from the heroic and fabulous ages. Among the arts, music alone can be purely religious. Painting cannot be confined to so abstract and vague an expression as that of sound. It is true that the happy combination of colours, and of the *chiaro-oscuro* produces, if it may be so expressed, a musical effect in painting; but as it represents life, it requires the expression of passions in all their energy and diversity. Undoubtedly it is necessary to choose, among historical facts, those which are sufficiently

known, not to require study in order to comprehend them ; for the effect produced by painting ought to be immediate and rapid, like every other pleasure derived from the fine arts ; but when historical facts are as popular as religious subjects, they have the advantage over them of the variety of situations and sentiments which they retrace.

Lord Nelville thought, also, that the scenes of tragedy, and the most moving poetical fictions, ought to claim a preference in painting; in order that all the pleasures of the imagination, and of the soul, might be united. Corinna combated this opinion, fascinating as it was. She was convinced that the encroachment of one art upon another, was to them mutually injurious. Sculpture loses the advantages which are peculiar to it, when it aspires to represent a group of figures as in painting ; and painting the same when it wishes to attain

dramatic expression. The arts are limited in their means, though boundless in their effects. Genius seeks not to combat that which is in the essence of things; on the contrary, its superiority consists in discovering it.—“As for you, my dear Oswald,” said Corinna, “you do not love the arts in themselves, but only on account of their relation with mind and feeling. You are only sensible to that which represents the sorrows of the heart. Music and poetry agree with this disposition; whilst the arts, which speak to the eyes though their signification be ideal, only please and interest us when the soul and the imagination are entirely free, nor do we require, in order to relish them, that gaiety which society inspires; but only the serenity which beautiful weather, and a fine climate diffuse over the mind. We must be capable of feeling in those arts which represent exterior objects, the universal harmony of nature;

which is impossible when the soul is troubled ; that harmony having been destroyed in us by calamity.”—“ I know not,” replied Oswald, “ whether my taste in the fine arts be confined to that alone which can recall the sufferings of the soul ; but I know, at least, that I cannot endure their representation of physical pain. My strongest objection,” continued he, “ against christian subjects, in painting, is the painful sensations excited in me by the image of blood, wounds, and torture ; notwithstanding the victims may have been animated by the noblest enthusiasm. Philoctetus is, perhaps, the only tragical subject in which bodily ills can be admitted. But with how many poetical circumstances are his cruel pangs surrounded ? They have been caused by the arrows of Hercules. They will be healed by the son of *Æsculapius*. In effect, the wound is almost confounded with the moral resentment pro-

duced in him who is struck with it, and cannot convey any impression of disgust. But the figure of the man, possessed with a devil, in Raphael's superb picture of the transfiguration, is a disagreeable image, and possesses not the dignity of the fine arts. They must discover to us the charm of grief, like the melancholy of prosperity ; it is the ideal part of human destiny, which they should represent in each particular circumstance. Nothing torments the imagination more than bloody wounds, and nervous convulsions. It is impossible, in such pictures, not to seek, and, at the same time, dread to find the exactness of the imitation. What pleasure can we receive from that art which only consists in such an imitation ; it is more horrible, or less beautiful, than nature herself, the moment it only aspires to resemble her.

“ You are in the right, my lord,” said Corinna, “ to wish that christian subjects

were divested of painful images ; they do not require them. But confess, however, that genius, and the soul, can triumph over every thing. Behold that picture of the communion of St. Jerome, by Domini-
quino. The body of the dying saint is livid and lank : death has seized upon it. But in that look is eternal life, and every earthly misery seems produced here only to disappear before the pure lustre of one religious sentiment. However, dear Oswald,” continued Corinna, “ though I am not of your opinion in every thing, I will shew you that even in differing with one another there is some analogy of sentiment between us. I have endeavoured to accomplish what you desire, in the gallery of pictures, which has been furnished me by those artists who were of my acquaintance, among which are some designs of my own sketching. You will there see the defects and the advantages of those

subjects which you prefer. This gallery is at my country seat at Tivoli. The weather is fine enough to visit it.—Shall we go thither to-morrow?" As she awaited Oswald's consent, he said to her: "My love, have you any doubt of my answer? Have I, in this world, any other pleasure, any other thought besides you? And is not my life, too free perhaps from any occupation, and from every interest, solely taken up with the happiness of seeing and hearing you?"

CHAP. IV.

THEY set out, therefore, the next day for Tivoli. Oswald himself drove the four horses that drew them; he took pleasure in their rapidity, which seemed to increase the vivacity of thought and of existence, and such an impression is sweet by the side of the object we love. He performed the office of driver with the most extreme attention, for fear the slightest accident should happen to Corinna. He felt the duties of a protector, which is the softest tie that binds man to woman. Corinna

was not like the greater part of females, easily terrified by the possible dangers of a journey; but it was so sweet to remark the solicitude of Oswald, that she almost wished to be frightened, to enjoy the pleasure of hearing him cheer and comfort her.

That which gave Lord Nelville, as will be seen in the sequel, so great an ascendancy over the heart of his mistress, was the unexpected contrasts, which gave a peculiar charm to his manners. Every body admired his intellect, and the gracefulness of his figure; but he must have been particularly interesting to a female, who, uniting in herself, by a singular accord, constancy and mutability, took delight in impressions, at once various and uniform. Never did he think of any thing but Corinna; and this very occupation of his mind incessantly assumed different characters: at

one time he was governed by reserve, at another, he was open and communicative: one moment he was perfectly calm, and another a prey to the most gloomy and bitter sensations, which proved the profundity of his sentiment; but mingled trouble with confidence, and incessantly gave birth to new emotions. Oswald, internally agitated, endeavoured to assume an external appearance of composure, and Corinna, occupied in conjecturing his thoughts, found in this mystery a continual interest. One would have said, that the defects of Oswald were only made to set off his agreeable qualities. No man, however distinguished, in whose character there was no contradiction, who was subject to no internal conflict, could have captivated the imagination of Corinna. She felt a sort of awe of Oswald, which subjected her to him. He reigned over her soul, by a good, and by an evil

power; by his qualities, and by the disquietude which these qualities, badly combined, could inspire: in effect there was no security in the happiness that Lord Nelville conferred, and perhaps the violence of Corinna's passion was owing to this; perhaps she could only love, to such a pitch, him whom she feared to love. A superior mind, a sensibility as ardent as it was delicate, could become weary of every thing, except that truly extraordinary man, whose soul, constantly agitated, seemed like the sky—sometimes serene, sometimes covered with clouds. Oswald, always true, always of profound and impassioned feelings, was nevertheless often ready to renounce the object of his tenderness; because a long habit of mental pain made him believe, that only remorse and suffering could be found, in the too exquisite affections of the heart.

Lord Nelville and Corinna, in their

journey to Tivoli, passed before the ruins of Adrian's palace, and the immense garden which surrounded it. He had collected together, in this garden, the most rare productions, the most admirable chefs-d'œuvre of those countries which were conquered by the Romans. To this very day are seen there, some scattered stones, which are called *Egypt*, *India*, and *Asia*. Farther on was the retreat, where Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, terminated her days. She has not supported, in adversity, the greatness of her destiny; she was incapable of dying for glory like a man; or like a woman, dying rather than betray her friend.

At length they discovered Tivoli, which was the abode of so many celebrated men, of Brutus, of Augustus, of Mecenas, and of Catullus; but above all, the abode of Horace, for it is his verse which has rendered this retreat illustrious. The house

of Corinna was built over the noisy cascade of Teverone; at the top of the mountain, opposite the garden, was the temple of the Sybil. It was a fine idea of the ancients, to place their temples on the summit of elevated places. They majestically presided over the surrounding country, as religious ideas should over every other thought. They inspired more enthusiasm for nature, in announcing the Deity, from which she emanates, and the eternal acknowledgement of successive generations towards her. The landscape, from whatever point of view considered, formed a picture with the temple, which was placed there as the centre, and the ornament of the whole. The ruins spread a singular charm over the *campagna* of Italy. They do not recall, like modern edifices, the labour and the presence of man; they are confounded with nature, and the trees; they seem in harmony with the solitary

torrent ; they present the image of time, which has made them what they are. The most beautiful countries in the world, when they bring to mind no recollection, when they bear the stamp of no remarkable event, are stripped of interest, when compared with historical countries. What place in Italy could be more suitable for the habitation of Corinna, than the retreat consecrated to the sybil, to the memory of a woman, animated by divine inspiration. The house of Corinna was delightful ; it was ornamented with the elegance of modern taste, and, notwithstanding it discovered the charm of an imagination, enamoured of the beauties of antiquity, happiness, in the most elevated sense of the word, seemed to reign there ; a felicity which consisted in all that ennobles the soul, excites thought, and vivifies talent.

In walking with Corinna, Oswald perceived that the wind possessed an har-

monious sound, and filled the air with notes, which seemed to proceed from the waving of the flowers, and the rustling of the trees, and to give a voice to nature. Corinna told him, that the wind produced this harmony from the æolian harps, which she had placed in grottoes to fill the air with sound, as well as perfumes. In this delicious abode, Oswald was inspired with the purest sentiment.—“Hear me,” said he to Corinna; “till this moment I felt the happiness I derived from your society, blended with remorse; but now I say to myself, that you are sent by my father, to terminate my sufferings upon this earth. It is him whom I have offended; but it is, nevertheless, him who has obtained my pardon in heaven.” Corinna! “cried he,” throwing himself upon his knees, “I am pardoned; I feel it in this sweet calm of innocence, which pervades my soul. Thou canst now, without apprehension, unite thy-

self to me, nor fear that fate opposes our union.”—“ Well,” said Corinna, “ let us continue to enjoy this peace of the heart, which is granted us. Let us not seek to penetrate the decrees of fate ! Since we are now happy, let us not desire a change !”

Lord Nelville was hurt at this answer of Corinna. He conceived she ought to comprehend, that he was ready to tell her every thing, to promise every thing, if she would only confide to him her history ; and this manner of avoiding it gave him as much offense as it did concern ; he did not perceive that a sense of delicacy prevented Corinna from taking advantage of his emotion, to bind him by an oath. Perhaps also, it is in the nature of a profound, and genuine passion, to dread a solemn moment, however much desired, and to tremble at exchanging hope for happiness itself. Oswald, far from judging in this manner, persuaded himself, that

although Corinna loved him, she wished to preserve her independence, and intentionally deferred all that might lead to an indissoluble union. This thought excited in him a painful irritation, and, immediately assuming a cold and reserved air, he followed Corinna to her gallery of pictures, without uttering a word. She soon divined the impression she had produced on him; but sensible of his proud feelings, she durst not impart to him her observations; however, in shewing him her pictures, and discussing general topics, she felt a vague hope of softening him, which gave to her voice a more moving charm, even when uttering the most indifferent words.

Her gallery was composed of historical pictures, paintings on poetical and religious subjects, and landscapes. None of them contained that number of figures which, though more difficult, affords less pleasure.

The beauties of that style of painting are too confused, or too minute. That unity of interest, which is the vital principle of the arts, as well as anything else, is necessarily divided and scattered. The first of the historical pictures represented Brutus, in profound meditation, seated at the foot of the statue of Rome. In the back ground, the slaves are carrying the lifeless bodies of his two sons, whom he had condemned to death; and on the other side of the picture, the mother and sisters appear plunged into an agony of grief; the women are, happily, divested of that courage which can triumph over the affections of the heart. The statue of Rome, placed by the side of Brutus, is a fine idea; it speaks eloquently. Yet how can any body know, without an explanation, that it is Brutus, the father, who has just sent his sons to execution? Nevertheless, it is impossible

to characterise this event better than it is done in this picture. At a distance is perceived the city of Rome in its ancient simplicity, without edifices or ornaments, but full of patriotic grandeur, since it could inspire such a sacrifice.—“ Undoubtedly,” said Corinna, “ when I have named Brutus, your whole soul will become fixed to this picture ; but still it would be possible to behold it without knowing the subject it represented. And does not this uncertainty, which almost ever exists in historical pictures, mingle the torment of an enigma with the enjoyment of the fine arts, which ought to be so easy and so clear ?

“ I have chosen this subject because it recalls the most terrible action that love of our country has inspired. The companion to this picture is, Marius, spared by Cimper, who cannot bring himself to kill this great man ; the figure of Marius is im-

posing; the costume of Cimber, and the expression of his physiognomy, is very picturesque. It is the second epoch of Rome, when laws no longer existed, but when genius still exercised considerable influence upon circumstances. Then comes that æra when talents and fame were only objects of misfortune and insult. The third picture, which you see here, represents Belisarius, carrying on his shoulders the dead body of his young guide, and asking alms to bury him. Belisarius, blind and mendicant, is thus recompensed by his master; and in the universe which he has conquered, he is employed in bearing to the grave, the remains of the poor boy, who alone had not abandoned him. This figure of Belisarius is admirable; another so fine is not to be found in the modern school. The painter, with a truly poetical imagination, has united here every species of misfortune, and, perhaps,

even the picture is too dreadful to awaken so soft an emotion as pity : but who tells us it is Belisarius? to indicate him he should be faithful to history : but that fidelity would deprive the subject of all its picturesque beauty. After these pictures, which represent in Brutus, virtues approaching to crime ; in Marius glory, the cause of calamity ; in Belisarius, services paid by the blackest persecutions ; in short, every misery of human destiny, which are recorded in the events of history, I have placed two pictures of the old school, which a little relieve the oppressed soul, in recalling that religion which has consoled the enslaved and distracted universe, that religion which enlivens the heart, when all without is only oppression and silence. The first is from Alban ; he has painted the infant Jesus sleeping on a cross. Behold the sweetness and calm of that countenance ! What pure ideas it recalls ; how it convinces the soul that

celestial love has nothing to fear, either from affliction or death. The second picture is from Titian; the subject is Christ sinking beneath the weight of the cross. His mother comes to meet him, and throws herself upon her knees on perceiving him. Admirable reverence in a mother, for the misfortunes and divine virtues of her son ! What a look is that of our Redeemer, what a divine resignation in the midst of suffering, and in this suffering what sympathy with the heart of man ! That is, doubtless, the finest of my pictures. It is that towards which I incessantly turn my eyes, without ever being able to exhaust the emotion which it inspires. Next come the dramatic pieces," continued Corinna, " taken from four great bards. Judge with me, my lord, of the effect which they produce. The first represents Æneas in the Elysian field, when he wishes to approach Diana. The indig-

nant shade retires, rejoiced that she no longer carries in her bosom that heart, which would still beat with love at the aspect of her guilty paramour. The vapoury colour of the shades, and the paleness of the surrounding scene, form a contrast with the animated air of Æneas, and the sybil who conducts him. But this kind of effect is an amusement of the artist, and the description of the poet is, necessarily, superior to anything that painting can produce. I will say as much of this picture of Clorinda dying, and Tancréd. The utmost pathos which it can excite, is to call to our minds the beautiful lines of Tasso, when Clorinda pardons her adoring enemy, who has just pierced her breast. Painting necessarily becomes subordinate to poetry, when devoted to subjects which have been handled by great poets; for their words leave an impression which

effaces every other ; the situations which they have chosen almost ever derive their chief strength from their developement of the passions and their eloquence, whilst the greater part of picturesque effects arise from a calm beauty, a simple expression, a noble attitude, a moment of repose, in short, worthy of being indefinitely prolonged without ever wearying the eye.

“ Your terrible Shakespeare, my lord,” continued Corinna, “ has furnished the subject of the third dramatic picture—it is Macbeth,—the invincible Macbeth—who, ready to fight Macduff, whose wife and children he has put to death, learns that the oracle of the witches is accomplished, that Birnam Wood is advancing to Dunsinane, and that he is fighting a man who was born after the death of his mother. Macbeth is conquered by fate, but not by his adversary.—He grasps the sword with a desperate hand ;—he knows that he is

about to die;—but wishes to try whether human strength cannot triumph over destiny. There is, certainly, in this head, a fine expression of disorder and fury—of trouble and of energy; but how many poetical beauties do we miss? Is it possible to paint Macbeth plunged in guilt by the spells of ambition, which offer themselves to him under the shape of witchcraft? How can painting express the terror which he feels? That terror which is, however, reconcileable with intrepid bravery? Is it possible to characterise that peculiar species of superstition which oppresses him? That belief, without dignity, that hell-born fatality which weighs him down, his contempt of life, his horror of death? Undoubtedly the human countenance is the greatest of mysteries; but the motionless physiognomy of a painting can never express more than the workings of a single sentiment. Contrasts, conflicts of

the mind, events, in short, belong to the dramatic art. Time and motion are not to be represented in painting.

“ The Phedra of Racine has furnished the subject of the fourth picture,” said Corinna, shewing it to Lord Nelville.—

“ Hippolitus, in all the beauty of youth and innocence, repels the perfidious accusations of his mother-in-law ; the hero, Theseus, still protects his guilty spouse, whom he encircles with his conquering arm. There is in the countenance of Phedra, a trouble which freezes the soul with horror ; and her nurse, without remorse, encourages her in her guilt. Hippolitus is, in this picture, perhaps more beautiful than even in Racine ; He resembles more the bust of Meleager, because no love for Aricia deranges the impression of his wild and noble virtue ; but is it possible to suppose, that Phedra, in the presence of Hippolitus, can support her

falsehood? Is it possible that she can behold him innocent and persecuted without falling at his feet? An offended woman may wrong the object of her affection in his absence; but when she sees him, her heart is wholly absorbed in love. The poet has never put Phedra and Hippolitus in the same scene after the former has calumniated the latter; the painter has been obliged to do so in order to assemble, as he has done in his picture, all the beauties of the contrast; but is not this a proof that there is such a difference between poetical and picturesque subjects, that it would be better for the poets to write from pictures, than for the painters to compose their works from the poets? The history of the human mind proves to us, that imagination must always precede thought."

Whilst Corinna was thus explaining her pictures to Lord Nelville, she had stopped

several times, in the hope that he would speak to her; but his wounded soul did not betray itself by a single word; he only, whenever she expressed a feeling idea, sighed and turned his head, in order that she might not see how easily, in his present state of mind, he was affected: Corinna, overcome by this silence, sat down and covered her face with her hands—Lord Nelville for some time walked about the room with a hurried step, then, approaching Corinna, was about to betray his feelings; but the invincible pride of his nature repressed his emotion, and he returned to the pictures as if he were waiting for Corinna to finish shewing them. Corinna expected much from the effect of the last of all; and, making an effort, in her turn, to appear calm, she arose and said, “My lord, I have yet three landscapes to shew you—two of them are allied to very interesting ideas: I am not fond of

those rustic scenes which are as dull, in painting, as idylls when they make no allusion to fable or to history. I am most pleased with the manner of Salvator Rosa, who represents, as you see in this picture, a rock with torrents and trees, without a single living creature, without even a bird, recalling an idea of life. The absence of man, in the midst of natural scenes, excites deep reflection. What would the earth be in this state of solitude? A work without an aim; and, nevertheless, most beautiful, while we could only address to God the impressions we received from it.

We are come, at last, to the two pictures in which, according to my opinion, history and poetry are happily blended with landscape. (21) One represents the moment when Cincinnatus is invited by the consuls to

leave the plough, in order to take the command of the Roman armies. In this landscape you behold all the luxury of the South, its abundant vegetation, its burning sky, the smiling aspect of all nature, discoverable even in the plants; and that other picture, which forms a contrast with this, is the son of Cairbar asleep upon the tomb of his father.—For three days and three nights he has awaited the arrival of the bard, who is to honour the memory of the dead. The bard is perceived at a distance, descending the mountain; the shadow of Cairbar hovers in the clouds; the country is covered with hoar frost; the trees, though naked, are agitated by the wind, and their dead branches, and dried leaves, still follow the current of the storm.

Till then, Oswald had been influenced by resentment at what had taken place

in the garden ; but on beholding this picture, the tomb of his father, and the mountains of Scotland, appeared to his mind, and his eyes were filled with tears. Corinna takes her harp, and, before this picture, begins to sing one of those Scotch ballads, whose simple notes seem to accompany the noise of the wind, mournfully complaining through the vallies. She sings the farewell of a warrior, quitting his native land and his mistress ; and the word, *no more*, one of the most harmonious and feeling in the English language, is pronounced by Corinna with the most moving expression. Oswald seeks not to resist his emotion, and both yield, without restraint, to their tears.—“ Ah!” cried Lord Nelville, “ does my native country speak no language to thine heart? Wouldst thou follow me into those retreats, peopled by

my recollections? Wouldst thou be the worthy companion of my life, as thou art the enchantress of my pleasure?"—"I believe so," replied Corinna—"I believe so; for I love thee!"—"In the name of love then, no longer conceal any thing from me," said Oswald.—"I consent, interrupted Corinna; "since it is thy wish. My promise is given; I only annex to it one condition, which is, that thou wilt not exact it of me before the approaching epoch of our religious ceremonies. Will not the support of heaven be more than ever necessary to me at the moment when my fate is about to be decided?"—"No more," cried Lord Nelville, "if that fate depend upon me, it is no longer doubtful."—"Thou thinkest so," replied she; "I have not the same confidence; but, in a word, I intreat thee shew that condescension to my weakness

which I request.”—Oswald sighed, without either granting or refusing the delay required.—“ Let us now return to town,” said Corinna. “ How can I conceal any thing from thee in this solitude? And if what I have to relate must divide us, ought I so soon——Let us go, Oswald—thou wilt return hither again, happen what may: in this spot, my ashes will find repose.” Oswald, much affected, obeyed Corinna. He returned to the city with her, and scarcely a word passed between them upon the road. From time to time they looked at each other, when their eyes eloquently spoke affection; but, nevertheless, a sentiment of melancholy reigned at the bottom of their souls, when they arrived in the middle of Rome.

BOOK IX.



The popular Festival, and Music.

CHAP. I.

It was the last day of carnival, which is the most noisy festival of the year, when a fever of joy, a mania of amusement seized the Roman people, unparalleled in any other country.—All the city is disguised; hardly does there remain, at the windows, an unmasked spectator: the scene of gaiety commences at a given hour, on a certain day; and scarcely ever does any pub-

lie or private event of the year hinder any person from joining the sports of the season.

It is then that we can form a judgment of the extent of imagination possessed by the common people. Italian, even in their mouth, is full of charms. Alfieri said, that he went to the public market at Florence to learn to speak good Italian,—Rome has the same advantages: and, perhaps, these are the only two cities in the world where the people speak so well, that the mind may receive entertainment at every corner of the street.

That kind of humour which shines in the authors of harlequinades, and opera-buffo, is very commonly found even among men without education. In these days of carnival, when extravagance and caricature are admitted, the most

comic scenes take place between the masks.

Often a burlesque gravity is contrasted with the vivacity of the Italians; and one would say that these fantastic vestments inspired a dignity in the wearers, not natural to them; at other times, they manifest such a singular knowledge of mythology in their disguises, that we would be inclined to believe the ancient fables still popular in Rome; and more frequently they ridicule different gradations of society, with a pleasantry full of force and originality. The nation appears a thousand times more distinguished in its sports than in its history. The Italian language yields to every shade of gaiety, with a facility which only requires a light inflection of the voice, and a little difference of termination to increase or diminish, to ennoble or travesty the

sense of words. It is particularly graceful in the mouth of children. The innocence of this age, and the cunning natural to the language, form an exquisite contrast. (22) In effect, it may be said, that it is a language which explains itself without any aid, and always appears more intellectual than he who speaks it.

There is neither luxury nor good taste in the feast of carnival; a kind of universal petulance makes it resemble the bacchanals of the imagination; but in imagination only is this resemblance; for the Romans are, in general, very sober, and, except the last day of carnival, tolerably serious. We often make sudden discoveries of every sort in the character of the Italians, and this is what contributes to give them the reputation of being subtle and crafty.—There is, undoubtedly, a strong habit of

dissimulation in this country, which has supported so many different yokes; but it is not to dissimulation that we must always attribute the rapid transition from one manner of being to another. An inflammable imagination is often the cause of it. The character of a people who are only rational or sensible, may be easily understood, and will not suddenly surprise us, but all that belongs to the imagination is unexpected. It leaps over intermediate barriers, it is often hurt at nothing, and frequently indifferent to that which ought most to affect it. In fact, every thing passes in itself, and we can never calculate its impressions from their causes.

For example, we cannot comprehend what amusement the Roman nobility find in riding in their carriages, from one end of the *corso*, to the other, for whole hours together, as well during the carnival, as

on the other days of the year. Nothing ever alters them from this custom. There are also, among the masks, men who saunter about, with every appearance of *ennui*, in the most ridiculous costume imaginable, and who,—melancholy harlequins, and silent punchinellos,—do not say a word the whole evening, but appear, if it may be so expressed, to have satisfied their carnival conscience, by having neglected nothing to be merry.

We find at Rome, a certain species of mask, which is not seen elsewhere: masks formed after the figures of the ancient statues, and which, at a distance, imitate the most perfect beauty—the women often lose greatly by removing them. But, nevertheless, this motionless imitation of life, these stalking wax countenances, however pretty they may be, have something frightful in them. The great Lords make a tolerably grand display of carriages

on the last days of the carnival; but the pleasure of this festival is the crowd, and the confusion: it seems like a relic of the *Saturnalia*; every class in Rome is mixed together. The most grave magistrates ride with official dignity, in the midst of the masks; every window is decorated. The whole city is in the streets: it is truly a popular festival. The pleasure of the people consists neither in the shews, nor the feasts that are given them, nor the magnificence they witness. They commit no excess either in drinking or eating: their recreation is to be set at liberty, and to find themselves among the nobility, who, on their side, are pleased at being among the people. It is the refinement and delicacy of amusements, as well as the perfection of education, that place a barrier between different classes of people. But in Italy, this distinction of rank is not very sensible; the country is more charac-

terised by the natural talent, and imagination of all, than by the extraordinary cultivation of the first classes. There is therefore, pending carnival, a complete medely of ranks, of manners, and of sentiments: the crowd, the cries, the bon-mots, and the comfits, with which they inundate, without distinction, the carriages as they pass along, confound every mortal together, and set the nation pell-mell, as if social order no longer existed.

Corinna, and Lord Nelville, both buried in thought, arrived in the midst of this tumult. They were at first almost stunned; for nothing appears more singular than this activity of noisy pleasures, when the soul is entirely absorbed in itself. They stopped at the square of the people, to ascend the amphitheatre near the obelisk, whence is seen the race course. At the moment they got out of their calash, the Count d'Erfeuil perceived them, and took Oswald aside to speak to him.

“It is not right,” said he, “to shew yourself in this public manner, arriving from the country, alone with Corinna; you will compromise her character, then what will you do?” “I do not think,” answered Nelville, “that I compromise the character of Corinna, by shewing the attachment she inspires me with. But were that even true, I should be too happy, if the devotion of my life—” “As to your being happy,” interrupted the Count, “I do not believe it;” people can only be happy in acting becomingly. Society, think as you may, has much influence upon our happiness, and we should never do what it disapproves.”—“We should then never be guided by our own thoughts, and our own feelings; but live entirely for society. If it be so, if we are constantly to imitate one another, to what purpose was a soul, and an understanding, given to each? Providence might have spared this super-

fluity.”—“That is very well said,” replied the Count, “very philosophically thought; but people ruin themselves by these kind of maxims, and when love is gone, the censure of opinion remains. I, who appear to possess levity, would never do any thing to draw upon me the disapprobation of the world. We may indulge in trifling liberties, in agreeable pleasantries, which announce an independent manner of thinking, provided we do not carry it into action; for when it becomes serious—” “But the serious consequences are love and happiness,” answered Lord Nelville.—“No, no;” interrupted the Count d’Erfeuil, “that is not what I mean to say; but there are certain established rules of *bienseance*, which we must not brave, on pain of passing for a singular man, a man—in fact, you understand me—for a man who is not like others.”—Lord Nelville smiled, and without being in the least vexed; for he wa

by no means pained with these remarks; he rallied the Count upon his frivolous severity; he felt, with secret satisfaction, that for the first time, on a subject which caused him so much emotion, the Count did not possess the least influence over him. Corinna, at a distance, conjectured what was passing; but the smile of Nelville restored tranquillity to her heart, and this conversation of the Count d'Erfeuil, far from embarrassing Oswald, or his fair companion, only inspired them with a temper of mind more analagous to the scene before them.

The horse-racing was about to begin. Lord Nelville expected to see races like those of England; but what was his surprise, when informed that only little nags, without riders, were to run against each other. This sight excites the attention of the Romans in a singular manner. The moment it is about to

commence, all the crowd arrange themselves on each side of the way. The square, which was covered with people, is empty in a moment. Each one ascends the amphitheatres which surround the obelisk, and innumerable multitudes of black heads, and black eyes, are turned towards the bar from which the horses are to start.

They arrive without bridle or saddle, with merely a rich cloth thrown over their backs, and led by grooms, extremely well-dressed, who take a most passionate interest in their success. The horses are placed behind the bar, and their ardour to clear it is excessive. They are obliged to hold them every minute; they caper, they neigh, they clatter with their feet, as if they were impatient of a glory which they are about to obtain themselves without the guidance of man. This impatience of the horses, and the shouts of the grooms at the

moment when the bar falls, form a perfect *Coup-de-Théâtre*. The horses start, the grooms cry "*Room ! Room !*" with inexpressible transport. They accompany the horses with their voice and gestures till they are out of sight. The horses seem inspired with the same emulation as men. The pavement sparkles beneath their feet ; their mane flies in the air, and their desire, thus left to their own efforts, of winning the prize is such, that there have been some who, in arriving at the goal, have died from the swiftness with which they have run. It is astonishing to see these horses thus animated with personal passions ; it almost induces a belief that thought exists beneath this animal form. The crowd break their ranks when the horses are gone by, and follow them in disorder. They reach the Venetian palace which serves for the goal. Never was anything like the cries of the

grooms, whose horses are victors. He who had gained the first prize, threw himself on his knees before his horse, and thanked him, in recommending him to the protection of St. Anthony, the patron of animals, with an enthusiasm as serious in him, as the spectators found it comic.

It is generally the close of day when the races finish. Then commences another kind of amusement, much less picturesque, but also very noisy. The windows are illuminated. The guards abandon their post, to mix in the general joy. Each one then takes a little torch, called *mocolo*, and they seek mutually to extinguish each other's light, in repeating the word *ammazzare* (kill) with a formidable vivacity. *Che la Bella Principessa sia ammazata! Che il signore abbate sia ammazata!* (Let the fair princess be killed! kill Mr Abbé!) is shouted from one end

of the street to the other.(24) The crowd, become emboldened, because at this hour horses and carriages are forbidden, precipitate themselves on all sides. At length there is no other pleasure than that of tumult and disorder. In the mean time night advances, the noise ceases by degrees—a profound silence succeeds, and there only remains of this evening the confused idea of a dream, in which, for a moment, the people had forgotten their labour, the learned their studies, and the nobility their idleness.

END OF VOL. II.

G. SIDNEY, Printer,
Northumberland Street, Strand.

NOTES

TO THE SECOND VOLUME.

PAGE 75, line 8.

Mr. Roscoe, author of the History of the Medici, has recently published an History of Leo X. which is truly a chef-d'oeuvre in its kind, in which he relates all those marks of esteem and admiration, which the princes and the people of Italy have conferred on distinguished men of letters; he also shews, that the conduct of many of the Popes has been, in this respect, very liberal.

Page 100, line 12.

Cesarotti, Verri, and Bettinelli, are three living authors who have introduced mind into Italian prose; it must be confessed, that this was not the case for a long time before.

Page 125, line 17.

Giovanni Pindemonte, has recently published

a collection of Dramas, the subject of which is taken from Italian history, and this is a very interesting and praiseworthy enterprize. The name of Pindemonte, is also rendered illustrious by Hippolito Pindemonte, one of the sweetest and most charming of the present Italian poets.

Page 129, line 22.

The posthumous works of Alfieri are just published, in which are to be found many exquisite pieces; but we may conclude from a rather singular Dramatic Essay, which he has made on the Death of Abel, that he himself was conscious that his pieces were too austere, and that on the stage more must be allowed to the pleasures of the imagination.

Page 180, line 4.

I have taken the liberty here to borrow some passages of the Discourse on Death, which is to be found in the *Cours de Morale Religieuse*, by M. Neckar. This work, which appeared in times when the attention was engrossed by political events, is sometimes confounded with another by the same author, called *l'Importance des Opinions Religieuses*, which has had the most brilliant suc-

cesss. But I dare affirm, that the former is the most eloquent work of my father. No minister of state, I believe, before him, ever composed works for the Christian pulpit; and that which ought to characterize this kind of writing from a man who has had so much dealings with his race, is a knowledge of the human heart, and the indulgence which this knowledge inspires: it appears then, that considered in these two points of view, the *Cours de Morale*, is perfectly original. Religious men in general do not mix in the world, and men of the world for the most part, are not religious: where then would it be possible to find to such a degree, knowledge of life united to the elevation which detaches us from it? I will assert, without being afraid, that my opinion will be attributed to my feelings, that this book ranks among the first of those which console the sensible being, and interest minds which reflect on the great questions that the soul incessantly agitates within us.

Page 208, line 3.

In a journal entitled *Europe*, are to be found observations full of information on subjects relating to painting: from this journal I have extracted many of these reflections, which have just

been read; Mr. Frederic Schlegel, is the author of it, and this writer, as well as the German thinkers in general, is an inexhaustible mine.

Page 239, line 20.

The historical pictures which compose the gallery of Corinna, are either from copies or originals of the Brutus of *David*, the Marius of *Dreut*, and the Belisarius of *Gerard*; among the other pictures mentioned, that of Dido is done by *M. Rehbero*, a German painter; that of Clorinda, is in the gallery of Florence; that of Macbeth, is in an English collection of pictures from Shakespeare; and that of Phedra, is by *Guerin*; lastly, the two landscapes of Cincinnatus and Ossian, are at Rome, and were done by Mr. Wallis, an English painter.

Page 247, line 5.

I asked a little Tuscan girl which was the handsomest, she or her sister? "Ah!" answered she, "*Il più bel viso è il mio*:"—Mine is the finest countenance.

Page 257, line 8.

An Italian postillion, whose horse was dying, prayed for him, saying, "*O Sant' Antonio, abbiate*

pietà dell' anima sua;"—O Saint Anthony, have mercy on his soul!

Page 258, line 1.

Goëthe has a description of the carnival at Rome, which gives a faithful and animated picture of that festival.

Field of the ... and ...
...

Page 25, line 1.

The ... of the ...
...

Staël

Corinna or, Italy in five volumes

Bd.: 2

London 1807

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